Reasons for the Possible Incomprehensibility of Some Verses of Three Translations of the Meaning of the Holy Quran into English

Raed Al-Jabari

European Studies Research Institute (ESRI)
School of languages
University of Salford, Salford, UK

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this research was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Salford. No portion of the work referred to in this research has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institution of learning.

Transliteration System

This research followed the following transliteration system proposed by Encyclopaedia of Islam.

ء	'
َ	a
ِ	i
ُ	u
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h̲
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s̲
ض	d̲
ط	t̲
ظ	z̲
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
آ	a̲
ة	h, t
ى	y
لا	la̲
ال	al

Abstract

Translations of the meaning of the Quran in English are becoming amongst the most read books in the world. Unfortunately, almost all the existing renditions fail to transfer the original clearly into the target language. They suffer from serious shortcomings that cause incomprehensibility in parts of the text. These renditions contain some elements that make the target reader struggle to understand the meaning. This research aims to contribute to overcoming the shortcomings of existing translations. It discusses the reasons why the English target reader of the Quran struggles to follow and comprehend the meaning of some of its verses, and attempts to find a workable methodology for translating the meaning of the Quran. It tries to find new methods to help tackle the weaknesses in the translations of the meaning of the Quran and provides suggestions for improving them. It is hoped this methodology will lead to producing a more accurate and comprehensible translation of the meaning of the Quran in which the meaning is transferred clearly in a natural-sounding target-language text, and that will improve comprehensibility for both Muslim and non-Muslim native speakers of English. This research also studies the role and importance of the translator in achieving a good translation, and tries to establish a set of criteria for the attributes and conditions of the translator of the Quran.

Chapter One

The Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Translation has played an increasingly significant role in the exchange of knowledge and culture amongst different peoples over the past few centuries. It has also played a vital part in developing some civilizations in relation to others. Translation has recently become an even more important factor than in the past in the understanding of different cultures and reciprocating knowledge. Hundreds of thousands of books and articles are translated every year. One of the most important books that has been translated into other languages is the Holy Quran. Over the past few centuries, with their different intentions, Muslim and non-Muslim translators have been very concerned to transfer the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic. English has been the most important of all these other languages. The importance of English translations has recently become greater than ever. This is because of the growing non-Arab Muslim communities in English-speaking countries, as well as greater academic interest in Islam. Moreover, the 9-11 terror attack and the continuous talk in the media about so-called Muslim terrorism, has inspired large numbers of native speakers of English to obtain and read different translations of this Book in order to understand Quranic teaching and the Muslim mentality. The point is: how accurate and comprehensible are these translations?

Despite the great effort of some translators to produce reliable translations into English, those native speakers of English who have read the versions in their language have often failed to understand the real meaning due to the poor translation; the text was written in a peculiar and boring style, and its flow was impaired. They also misunderstood the content either because the meaning was not rendered accurately or was biased. This indicates that almost all the existing renditions of the Quran suffer from serious shortcomings and limitations, involving either distortion of the meaning or incomprehensibility of the text. Native speakers of Arabic who are knowledgeable about the Quran and have mastered English are usually stunned when they read translations of the meaning of the Quran into English. They notice that there are numerous

discrepancies between the original and the translation. Those who do not know Arabic and read the Quran in English fail to follow and understand the text.

Muslims believe that the Quran is the absolute Word of God. The Quranic text is very sensitive and no individual can alter any letter of it. In transferring the meaning into other languages, therefore, the translator must be extremely careful. The transfer of meaning must be very accurate; there must not be any loss in or addition to the rendered meaning and the meaning must be obvious. A small mistake in translating the meaning might be disastrous as it may mislead many. Unclear meaning leads to different interpretations, perhaps resulting in serious consequences. An example of this is the war between the United States of America and Japan which ended with tragic consequences when the United States hit Japan with two nuclear bombs. The dropping of the two bombs took place partly as a result of a mistake in translating the Japanese word "mokasutu" which was mentioned in a telegram in response by the Japanese to the American warning just hours before the catastrophic bomb. This word was wrongly translated as *ignored* instead of *considered.* Similarly, the incorrect English translation of the French version of United Nations' resolution 242 regarding Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian occupied land triggered a dilemma. The French statement "le retrait des territoires occupes" which means "the withdrawal from the occupied territories" was translated incorrectly into English as "the withdrawal from occupied territories". Dropping the article "the" before the word "occupied" cost the loss of most of the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 (Abdul Rahman 2001: 3).

Due to the pressing need for an accurate and clear translation, academic research must be carried out in this domain. Muslim researchers who are knowledgeable about the Quran and have a mastery of both English and Arabic supported by Muslim organizations should concentrate on studying existing translations, find out their shortcomings and limitations, and try to tackle these in order to be able to produce a reliable translation that is semantically clear and easily readable. This also requires finding compatible translators and a valid strategy for the mission of translation. This research aims to contribute to solving the shortcomings and limitations of the existing translations. It looks at some of the most readable translations in English. It shows weaknesses in these renditions and attempts to establish some well-grounded ways to improve them.

1.2 Reasons for choosing this topic

While doing an MA in English/Arabic translation at the University of Salford in England, I had many heated discussions with my English fellow students about Islam and Muslim behaviour. I noticed that they had ideas about Islam which do not conform to the standard views of authoritative Sunni scholars. They think that the Holy Quran enjoins Muslims to kill as many non-Muslims as they can. They also think that the Quran mistreats and abuses women. In order to convince my fellow students that their thoughts about the Quran and Islam are at variance with orthodox Sunni Islam, and that Islam and Muslims are misrepresented by the media, I brought a translation of the meaning of the Quran in English and I asked them to read some of its verses. The verses I asked them to read were proof of both the unorthodoxy of their ideas and the greatness of the thoughts that the Quran brought to humanity.

When my felloe students read the verses in question for the first and second time, they could not grasp any meaning. They all commented, "It does not make any sense". When I tried to explain the meanings myself, I discovered that I could not comprehend the meaning of the verses in English either. In order to find an easily comprehensible translation, I looked at other translations, but they had the same problems in transferring the meaning of some verses of the Quran. Each translation suffers from different reasons for possible incomprehensibility, which make the recipient strive to comprehend the meaning of certain verses. Therefore, I believe that research into this area is very important.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1) This study examines the comprehensibility of the translation of some verses of the Quran for native speakers of English.

2) It looks at the possible reasons for the failure to transfer the meaning of some verses of the Quran clearly. In other words, it discusses the reasons why the English target reader of the Quran struggles to follow and comprehend the meaning of some of its verses.

3) The research studies the role and importance of the translator in achieving a good translation.

It also tries to draw up a set of attributes and characteristics for the translator of the Quran.

4) The study attempts to find a workable methodology for translating the meaning of the Quran. It tries to identify procedures to tackle weaknesses in the translations considered and provides suggestions for improving them. This methodology may lead to producing a more accurate and comprehensible translation of the Quran in which the meaning is transferred clearly in a natural-sounding form in the target language. Therefore, the new translation will maximize the Quran's comprehensibility for almost every reader. It will try to improve comprehensibility for native speakers of English whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.

1.4 Research hypothesis

This research postulates that the meaning of some translated verses of the Quran in English is incomprehensible to native speakers of English who do not have previous knowledge of this Book. When an English recipient reads the Quran, he strives to follow and comprehend the meaning of its verses. This possible incomprehensibility results from poor translation such that the translators fail to transfer the original meaning effectively in the target language or because of an incomplete understanding of the original meaning. This hypothesis has been adopted by the researcher as a result of long discussions about some facts in the Quran with his fellow students, particularly native English speakers, at the University of Salford.

After considering some translations of the Quran in English, this research adopts the view that the inadequate translations of the meaning of the Quran in English produce two negative effects on the target reader. They are distortion of the meaning and incomprehensibility. Distortion of the meaning of some of the translated verses is believed, by the researcher, to be more serious than incomprehensibility. Distortion of the meaning of some verses of the Quran results from either the translator's misinterpretation of the original text or a literal translation. In some cases, translators of the Quran, particularly those whose native language is not Arabic, have misunderstood the meaning of some verses. This misunderstanding results in misinterpretation. As a result, translators have transferred their misinterpretation into the target language causing a serious distortion of the meaning. Consequently, this results in transferring a completely different meaning to the target reader. For example, the following verse was translated incorrectly and

therefore misleads the target reader.

*"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as **Aulia'** (friends)".*

Al-Hilali & Khan (5:51)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ

The translators misunderstood the meaning of the original word "*auliya*" and they mistranslated it as *friends*. This translation is far away from the real meaning of *auliya*. In this verse, God orders Muslims to be loyal and keep their affiliation to each other (Muslims) in matters of religion and state. God also orders Muslims not to rely on Jews and Christians to be leaders and protectors and not to ally with them against Muslims (TanTawi 1999 vol 1: 1294). It is clear that this mistranslation has a very bad effect on the Christian and the Jewish reader. They will believe that the Holy Quran of Muslims teaches them not to befriend Jews and Christians, which is not true. As a result, this bad translation will arouse hatred and bias towards Islam and Muslims. This poor translation results in a serious distortion of the meaning of the Quran and causes great harm to the reputation of Islam and Muslims. The meaning of the word *auliya* might be *protectors* and not friends. Therefore, the translation for this verse ought to be "O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as protectors".

In other cases as well, translators have transferred the meaning of some verses of the Quran literally into the target text where, by chance, the literal translation sounds natural and readable in some verses but the transferred meaning is entirely different. Therefore, the English recipient reads and understands some meaning, but what they understand is different from the meaning of the original text. This literal translation also results in a serious distortion of the meaning. The following example illustrates this.

*"All who obey Allah and the apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah, of the prophets (who teach), the sincere (lovers of truth), **the witnesses (who testify)**, and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! what a beautiful fellowship!*

Ali (4:69)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

In this verse, Yusuf Ali translates the word *shuhada'* literally as witnesses. This literal translation results in a complete change of the original meaning, which is *martyrs*. Therefore, this inaccurate translation is comprehensible to the reader because it is transferred meaningfully but what he understands is completely different from the original meaning. This is considered a very serious distortion of the original meaning of the Quran, especially as the target reader is not aware of this great mistake since he does not have previous knowledge about it.

This research will not look at distortion resulting from mistranslation or misinterpretation. It will only concentrate on studying the reasons for the incomprehensibility of some translated verses of the meaning of the Quran in English resulting from the failure of translators to transfer the meaning in a readable way or other possible reasons. According to this hypothesis, the incomprehensibility of the translation of some verses of the meaning of the Quran is due to a number of different reasons such as literal translation, cultural voids, peculiar style, excessive use of transliteration, excessive explanations in brackets, use of old-fashioned vocabulary, unusual orthography and punctuation, etc. The following examples support this hypothesis.

*Thus We appointed you a **midmost nation***
that you might be witnesses to the people,
and that the Messenger might be a witness
*to you; and We did not appoint the **direction***
thou wast facing, except that We might Know
who followed the Messenger from him who turned
on his heels-though it were a grave thing
save for those whom God has guided; but
God would never leave your faith to waste-
truly, God is All-gentle with the people,

All-compassionate.

Arberry (1955:46)

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

This verse may be incomprehensible to the English reader for several reasons. First, the verse starts with an ambiguous word. This word is *you*. The translator does not clarify to whom *you* refers. This causes ambiguity to the reader. Second, the overwhelming majority of English readers may possibly not comprehend what *midmost nation* is. This is because the translator uses a very old-fashioned expression, which is hardly known to people nowadays. Third, the word *direction* does not make any sense to the reader who does not have previous knowledge about this subject.

In order to enhance the comprehensibility of this verse, the translator has to make what is unclear to the English readers clear. He has to add some words in the body of the text in order to clarify the meaning. For example, the pronoun *you* refers to Muslims. Therefore, the translator might add the word Muslims between brackets after the pronoun *you* so that it becomes very clear to the reader. In addition, the translator should use contemporary vocabulary instead of *midmost* in order to transfer the meaning to all readers clearly. Finally, the translator has to clarify what *the direction* is. In this context, the direction refers to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. As the English reader may not understand this expression due to the cultural void or dogmatic difference, the translator has to clarify what is meant by *the direction* by adding that it is a mosque and giving its name and the location.

The following example also illustrates possible incomprehensibility.

We sent not an apostle, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah. If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah.s [sic] forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed oft-returning, Most Merciful.

Ali (4:64)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ
وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا

English and Arabic have very different systems of word order and style. Therefore, transferring the Arabic word order and Quranic style directly into English would results in an alien text, which may be incomprehensible to the English reader. This is very clear in this translated verse. The translator transfers the word order literally into English which results in a form of syntax which is peculiar to the English reader.

Moreover, using the word *apostle* causes another problem in comprehending the exact meaning of the verse. The English reader's understanding of *apostle* is related to Jesus' disciples. In the original text, the word *messenger* is mentioned twice and both of them refer to Muhammad. In the first part of the verse God says that the messenger Muhammad was sent to be obeyed, while in the second part, He says that if the hypocrites asked the messenger Muhammad to ask God for forgiveness, they would have found Him forgiving. The use of a Christian expression, apostle, to refer to all messengers including Muhammad in the first part of the translation, then using a different expression in the second part for the same person without explaining the situation, causes possible incomprehensibility. The English reader is not likely to understand that both terms *apostle* and *messenger* refer to the same person which is Muhammad.

Let us consider another reason for the possible incomprehensibility.

Verily, your Wali (Protector or Helper) is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, - those who perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat, and they are Raki'un (those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer).

Al-Hilali&Khan (5:55)

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

Transliteration is considered one of the main causes of incomprehensibility in the translations of the meaning of the Quran into English. Some translators adopt this approach because they believe that some Arabic words have no equivalents in other languages, but this approach is not positive in all cases. This is because transliteration does not elucidate the meaning of the words in question to the English reader. It is obvious in this verse that the comprehensibility of its meaning is not complete because of the transliteration of the two words *Salat* and *Zakat.* These two words are well known to Muslims but not to non-Muslims who do not have any previous knowledge about technical Quranic lexis. Therefore, in order to tackle this verse and to achieve a comprehensible translation, the translator should avoid transliteration where there is an exact meaning for the words meant in the context. For example, the word *As-Salat* has an equivalent meaning in English, which is *prayer.* Thus, the translator should use this word because it transfers the same meaning which the English reader understands easily. In cases where the words involved have no equivalent in English, the translator has to add some words to elucidate the meaning. For example, the translator could add the word *alms* between brackets after the word *Zakat* which makes it very clear.

1.5 The translations to be studied

During the twentieth century, both Muslims and non-Muslims translated the meaning of the Quran. The number of translations is thought to be more than fifty. Fourteen of these are popular nowadays (Mohammed, Kh: 2005). Due to the large number of translated versions and the impossibility of studying them all, only three particular translations will be considered in this research. These are:

1) Al-Hilali, M.T. & Khan, M. M. 1993. *Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qura'n.* Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam.

2) Ali, Yusuf. 1983. *The Holy Qura'n: The Translation and Commentary.* Beirut. Lebanon: Dar Al-Arabia.

3) Arberry, J. Arthur, 1991. *The Qura'n Interpreted: Translation with an Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

These three translations have been selected for the following reasons. First, the translation by Al-Hilali and Khan is the most widely available translation in the countries of native speakers of English. This is because Saudi Arabia sponsors the printing and distribution of millions of versions of this translation throughout the world every year. Moreover, many Muslim scholars favour this translation because it does not use archaic language and its style is considered, to some extent, better than other translations. In addition, Muslim scholars prefer this translation because it is translated by an Arab translator (Al-Hilali) and a Muslim scholar who mastered English (Khan). Second, the translation by Ali is popular among both Muslims and non-Muslim Westerners because this translation is one of the first and best translations and it has been revised and improved. In addition, Pakistani and some Saudi scholars support this translation. Third, Arberry's translation is often considered the best of the translations done by a non-Muslim translator because he transfers the meaning of the Quran faithfully and he attempts to preserve the style of the Quran in matters of music and rhythm. This translation is considered the main reference of Islam by Western academics (Khaleel, M. 2006 and Al-Sahli 1996).

Studying the weaknesses of these three translations does not mean that this research is an attempt to devalue the translations. These translations are, to some extent, considered the most three reputable versions of all the translations of the Quran. Despite great efforts made to produce these translations, they still suffer from some linguistic and translation problems. This study is an attempt to criticize these versions in order to propose ways of achieving a more sound translation.

Muhammad Muhsin Khan was born in 1927 in Qasur, a city in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. His grandfathers emigrated from Afghanistan escaping wars and tribal strife. He gained a Degree in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Punjab, Lahore. He worked in the University Hospital in the same city after which he traveled to England and stayed there for four years. He obtained a Diploma in Chest Diseases from the University of Wales. After that he went to Saudi Arabia and worked in the Ministry of Health for 15 years (Khaleel 2005).

Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali was born in 1890 in a village called Al-Fidah in a valley near Sajalmasah in Morocco. His grandfather migrated here from Al-Qairawan in Tunis. He belonged to a religious family and his father had a good knowledge of the Quran. He memorized the Quran while a boy of 12. He then studied the sciences of Hadith and Arabic. He graduated from Al-Qarawiyyth University and continued his education in Egypt. Then he obtained a doctorate degree from Berlin University in Germany (Khaleel 2005).

Al-Hilali traveled widely all over the world in search for knowledge. He visited India, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc. and worked as a teacher in these countries. He was employed in Baghdad University, as an assistant professor, then a professor. Lastly, he worked as a professor in the Islamic University in Al-Madinah, Saudi Arabia. Al-Hilali possessed a very good level of English. He and Muhammad Muhsin Khan together translated the meanings of the Quran, Sahih Al-Bukhari, and Al-Lulu-wal Marjan into English. He died in 1987 (Khaleel 2005).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali was born in 1872 to a religious Bohra family in Bombay, India although he himself was a Sunni. He memorized the Holy Quran and received Arabic and Islamic education when he was young. He obtained an Indian Civil Service award to do English literature at Cambridge University in which he excelled and published. He left for Europe and resided in London for a considerable period of time, wherein he developed an interest in the translation of the Quran into European languages. Later he returned to Lahore, India (now Pakistan) and became Dean of the Islamic College, where he began his translation and commentary on the Quran. He died in 1948 in London (Ali 1989: viii). While the Yusuf Ali translation still remains in publication, it has lost influence because of its dated language and the appearance of more recent works whose publication and distribution the Saudi government has also sought to subsidize (Khaleel 2005).

Arthur Arberry, a Cambridge University graduate, was born in 1905. He spent several years in the Middle East perfecting his Arabic and Persian language skills. For a short while, he served as Professor of Classics at Cairo University; in 1946, he became Professor of Persian at the University of London, and the next year transferred to Cambridge to become Professor of Arabic. Arberry served there until his death in 1969 (Lyons 2004).

1.6 Structure of the research

This research is divided into eight chapters. They are as follows:

Chapter Two, the literature review, looks at five important points. These points are:

1) What is the Quran? This point briefly discusses some key issues, such as how the Quran may be identified and the history of Its revelation. It also discusses the importance of this Book to Muslims.

2) The need for translation of the Quran. This point considers the reasons that encouraged Muslim scholars to call for translating the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic.

3) The (un)translatability of the Quran. This point discusses the points of view of Muslim scholars and translation theorists about the translatability of the Quran. It is shown that all Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and translation theorists stress that the Quran is in many respects untranslatable.

4) The permissibility of translating the Quran. This point shows that all Muslim scholars have strictly opposed the idea of translating the Quran (in the sense of producing a non-Arabic Quran) but they have agreed that the meaning of the Quran could be translatable into other languages.

5) A survey and assessment of the existing translations of the Quran into English. This point looks at all translations of the Quran into English published so far and comments briefly on the fidelity of some of these translations. It also sheds light on the efforts of some non-orthodox translators to represent their own beliefs in their translations.

Literal translation, style, and the cultural transfer are considered the main challenges that translators face. The incomplete knowledge of the source and target language, the insufficient mastery of the target style, and the lack of full awareness of one of the two cultures usually result

in poor translation. This is very evident in translations of the meaning of the Quran into English. Almost all translations of the meaning of the Quran suffer from one, if not more, of these shortcomings. Due to the great significance of these three elements in translation, this study considers them in two chapters.

Chapter Three studies the effect of literal translation on the meaning and intelligibility of the translated works. First, it looks at some definitions of literal translation proposed by theorists in an attempt to understand it clearly. Second, this chapter sheds light on some of the views of translation theorists about literal translation and its validity. Therefore, this chapter studies a number of translation theorists who oppose literal translation and other key theorists who favour it. The main theorists who oppose literal translation are Nida and Taber (1969), Nida (2001) and (2003), Baker (1992), Catford (1969), Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002), Nobokov (1975) and Hatim (1997). The main theorists who favour literal translation are Newmark (1988), Forrest (2003) Arnold (1862), and Dryden (1680). Problems encountered in literal translation and ways of dealing with them will be considered. This chapter also studies the negative effects of literal translation on the comprehensibility of some verses of the Quran in English.

Chapter Four investigate the issue of culture. This is because culture is thought by many scholars to pose the most difficult problems in translation. Translations of the meaning of the Quran into English often clearly suffer from the problems this poses. This chapter begins with identifying culture and shedding light on its relationship with language and translation. This chapter looks at Katan (1991), Bassnett (2002), Nida (2001), Popovic (1970) and others. This chapter focuses on considering the situations where problems arise in translating culture and then studying some main strategies set by some translation theorists to tackle this problem. Ivir (1995), Newmark (1988), Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002) are considered in this chapter. Moreover, this chapter shows how the translators of the meaning of the Quran fail to tackle cultural voids in their translations of the Quran into English. This will be explained by discussing some verses where culture is neglected.

Chapter Five introduces the approach and methods adopted in this study. First, it discusses briefly the positivist and anti-positivist paradigms. It then talks about qualitative and quantitative approaches, illustrating the different methods and the strengths and weaknesses of each. It then

justifies why this research adopts a quantitative approach to collecting the data needed to carry out the study. This research uses both questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was used as the main means for collecting the data, while interviews were conducted in order to both illustrate and illuminate some questionnaire responses and to check to what extent my translation of the extracts used in the questionnaire was comprehensible. Then, this chapter discusses the design of the questionnaire and the methods used to collect the data. Finally it explains the problems faced in conducting the questionnaire.

Chapter Six, the longest one in this study, analyzes the data collected by the questionnaire to test to what extent the extracts used in the questionnaire were comprehensible to the recipients and to find out the reasons that impeded intelligibility where the sample was not understandable. This chapter analyzes 42 questionnaires filled out by well educated academic and non-academic native speakers of English who have no previous knowledge of the Quran. First, it explains the meaning of each of the twenty samples used in the questionnaire and then explains why these samples are likely to be incomprehensible to the target reader. This chapter also suggests a translation for each extract. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The results are in three bar-chart tables. The first table shows the rate of comprehensibility of each sample, the second table illustrates the accuracy of the respondent's answers, and the third table demonstrates the reasons for the possible incomprehensibility claimed by the respondents. This chapter ends with an analysis the rate of the respondents' overall comprehension of the overall samples.

Chapter Seven discusses the questionnaire's conclusions and establishes some recommendations. First, it looks at the reasons that generate incomprehensibility and also shows how each reason affects the content. It explains these shortcomings in detail starting with the most common and problematic weakness claimed by respondents, then moving progressively to the least significant. Afterwards, it establishes some recommendations and some vital strategies to free the translations from these shortcomings. These recommendations will help to render the meaning of the Quran into English as accurately as possible so that it is readable and fluent.

Chapter Eight discusses an issue of particular importance. It is that of the characteristics and qualifications of the ideal translator of the Quran and it proposes a strategy for its translation. This chapter shows the importance of the role of the translator in achieving a successful

translation. It discusses the characteristics of the ideal translator in general and the attributes and qualifications of the translator of the Quran in particular. It also suggests that it is in practice impossible for the meaning of the Quran to be transferred by one translator. This chapter presumes that a number of translators and scholars of Arabic and English must be involved in the work. Furthermore, this chapter proposes a strategy that could be vital for translating the meaning of the Quran in an attempt to help to produce an acceptable and comprehensible translation. This chapter suggests that a translation of the meaning of the Quran must be carried out in three stages. The first stage must be carried out by a group of scholars headed by an exegete whose job is to interpret the meaning of the Quran to the translators. The second stage should be carried out by a group headed by an Arabic native-speaker translator. This group is responsible for translating the meaning of the Quran into English according to the interpretation of the most authoritative Muslim exegetes. Then, at the third stage a native English scholar of translation who is an expert in Arabic heads a group of English scholars. This group is responsible for working on finding a natural sounding and easily comprehensible English text.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at five important points. First, it presents information about the Quran to the reader. This point briefly introduces some key issues, such as how the Quran may be identified, the history of its revelation, and the importance of this Book to Muslims. Second, it looks at the (un)translatability of the Quran. This section discusses the points of view of Muslim scholars and translation theorists about the translatability of the Quran. Third, it discusses the need for translation of the Quran. This point considers the factors that encouraged some Muslim scholars to advocate the translation of the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic. Fourth, it looks at the permissibility of translating the Quran. This point identifies two different ideas. It studies both those scholars who oppose and those who support translating the meaning of the Quran. Finally, this chapter presents a survey and assessment of the existing translations of the Quran into English. This point looks at all translations of the Quran into English published so far and it comments briefly on the fidelity of some of these translations. It also sheds light on the efforts of some sectarian translators to insert their own beliefs into their translations.

2.2 What is the Quran?

Muslim scholars identify the Holy Quran as the literal word of God revealed to His messenger Muhammad by means of the Angel Gabriel in order to lead people out of the darkness of ignorance and polytheism to the light of guidance and monotheism. Moreover, Muslim scholars believe that the Quran was revealed in Arabic for instruction and challenge, and it was transmitted down to us from generation to generation, and established between the two covers of the Mushaf. Denffer (1989: 17) identifies the Quran as "The Word of God (Allah), sent down upon the last prophet Mohammed, through the Angel Gabriel, in its precise meaning and precise wording, transmitted to us by numerous persons, both verbally and in writing. It is inimitable and unique, protected by Alla from any corruption" (quoted in Al-Sahli 1996: 43). Hasanuddin (1996) identifies the Quran as "A collection of messages received by Prophet Muhammad (S) direct from

Allah; which he delivered under divine direction, to those around him and through them to the entire humanity. The Book is guidance from Allah for the mankind. It contains revelations received by Prophet Muhammad (S) from Allah during a period of about 23 years".

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad throughout a period of about 23 years. The first revelation was sent down in 610AD and the last one was in 632AD. The Quran consists of 114 chapters of varying length with a total of 6236 verses. The chapters are divided into thirty equal divisions and categorized into two kinds according to their place of revelation. Those chapters revealed in Mecca before the migration of Muhammad to Medina are called Meccan, while those revealed in Medina are called Medinan. Meccan chapters are generally short and consist of brief sentences which are full of enthusiasm and poetic usage. They stress the unity and majesty of God and denounce worshiping idols. They promise paradise for the righteous and warn wrongdoers of the severe punishment of hellfire. The Medinan chapters are long and the verses are more prosaic. These informative chapters clarify the aspects of Islam such as zakat (compulsory alms), fasting, hajj (pilgrimage) and other aspects. They also lay down criminal laws and social, economic and state policies. In addition, they give guidance for every aspect of personal life (Lings 1991).

The Quran, according to Muslims, is considered the eternal miracle of Islam. It is the complete and best guide for living one's life and seeking God's pleasure. The teachings of the Quran are universal, addressed to all people throughout the world regardless of their creed and colour. They enlighten man's soul, purify his morals, condemn all wrongs, enjoin good deeds and call for the establishment of justice. The Quran provides the regulations that create proper relations between man and God, and between man and man. It leads man to understand his role in this world, encourages him to think and ponder, and guides him to the use of natural resources. Simply, Muslim scholars stress that the Quran provides all the guidance that humans need, and without the guidance of the Quran, humanity would still be groping in the darkness of ignorance (Kidwai 1987).

The Quran was revealed piecemeal according to the needs of the time and events. The Angel Gabriel brought it to Muhammad who memorized it. Afterwards, it was preserved in two ways, either by memorizing or writing. Muhammad used to recite each revelation to his companions who memorized each revelation as soon as it was revealed, and thus had the whole Quran

memorized at the time of the final revelation. In addition, whenever any revelation took place, it was written at once on tablets, palm branches, leaves, or animal skin. This was done primarily by Zaid bin Thabit, who was the main scribe out of the 42 scribes of the revelation. Muhammad set the order of the chapters under the guidance of Angel Gabriel and ordered his companions to maintain that order. Abu Bakr, the first caliph of Islam, compiled the Quran, and Othman, the third caliph, made numerous copies and sent one copy to the capital of each of the seven major states in the region at that time (Kidwai 1987).

2.3 (Un)translatability of the Quran

The issue of the translation of the Quran started when the Quran was introduced to people whose mother tongue was not Arabic and when people who were not acquainted with Arabic accepted Islam. Ever since, many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars discussed this subject carefully. They were concerned to establish whether the Quran is translatable from a linguistic point of view or not. Those who have tried to translate the Quran from its Arabic original have found it impossible to express the same wealth of ideas with a limited number of words in the new language. Indeed, some writers, recognizing this extreme difficulty, have refrained from calling their works the "translation of the Quran." Those scholars such as Pickthall, Irving and Arberry, after their deep experience of translation, have stressed the fact that the translation of the Quran is impossible.

Arberry (1957) in his introduction to his work of translating the Quran "The Koran Interpreted" stresses the fact that the eloquent and rhetoric language of the Quran cannot be rendered into any other language. He literally agrees with Pickthall (1930) who states that "The Qur'an cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheikhs and the view of the present writer. The Book here is rendered almost literary, and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Qur'an, the inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy". Arberry (1957: 9) argues that "The Qur'an undeniably abounds in fine writing; it has its own extremely individual qualities; the language is highly idiomatic, yet for the most part delusively simple; the rhythms and rhymes are inseparable features of its impressive eloquence and these are indeed inimitable". Arberry concludes from his long experience of translation that the Quran is unarguably untranslatable.

Irving (1985: 27) states that "The Qur'an could be considered untranslatable, because each time one returns to the Arabic text, he finds new meanings and fresh ways of interpreting." He argues that it is impossible to find any language which is able to find equivalent expressions and meanings to the lofty language of the Quran. Concerning the meaning, Irving (1985:30) claims that any translation made by a translator will be affected by the translator's thoughts. This means that God's word is manipulated and this must be prevented. Therefore, the only solution to the issue of conveying the meaning of the Quran is to interpret it into foreign languages.

Tibawi (1962) is one of those eminent Muslim scholars who strictly oppose any attempt to translate the Quran into other languages. He argues that Arabic is a very rich language; its vocabulary is concise and full of metaphor and no language can rival it in this sense. He states "It is unanimous that it is virtually impossible to translate Arabic into any language, still less to translate the Arabic of the Quran." Tibawi supports his thought by referring to the philologist Ibn Qutaibah (835), who asserts that the Arabic language is unique among languages and superior to the languages of all other nations, precisely because of the characteristics which distinguish the language of the Quran. He adds that Ibn Qutaibah states that "no translator is able to put it into any (other) language, in a manner similar to the translation of the Gospel from Syriac into Ethiopic and Greek, and similar also to the translation of the Torah and Psalms and all God's Books into Arabic, for (the languages of) the non-Arabs are not as rich as that of the Arabs in metaphor". Moreover, Tibawi, in his argument, depends on Al-Ghazali's (1072) verdict that bans the translation of the Quran.

Hussein Abdul-Raof (2001), a recent Muslim Quran translation scholar, supports Tibawi in his argument. He stresses the untranslatability of the Quran for numerous reasons. He states that Quranic discourse involves linguistic scenery characterised by a rainbow of syntactic, semantic, rhetorical and cultural features that are distinct from other types of Arabic discourse. He asserts that most of these features are alien to the linguistic norms of other languages. He gives shifting as an example. Abdul-Raof says that some verses of the Quran shift from third person to second person and then to first person. They also shift from plural to singular within a given person, or make use of rhetorical questions. He gives the following verse as an example.

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا

"And those who believe in Allah and work righteousness, He will admit to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever: Allah has indeed granted for them a most excellent Provision." (65: 11)

Abdul-Raof believes that a translation of these kinds of verses will confuse the translator and the reader alike because other languages do not accept these kinds of shifts. Therefore, identical style to that of the language of the Quran will not be achieved in the translation.

Knut Bultemeier (2004), a German researcher and critic who is a specialist on the Middle East, argues that the translation of the Holy Quran into any language is impossible for many reasons. He believes that in order to translate the Quran, a translator must keep the same effect as the original text of the Quran on the reader or listener of the target language. He stresses Pickthall's (1930) thought that "The Quran has an inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. If the Quranic verses are translated into any other language, they will absolutely lose the same symphonic effect". Bultemeier adds another reason; he states that the Quran includes Syriac and Aramaic vocabulary which is exotic to Arabic. This foreign vocabulary increases the complexity of the translation process since the meaning of certain phrases is not clear and different interpretations are possible

Bultemeier (2004) stresses that culture and history play a very important role in the translation of the Quran. He suggests that a translator would nevertheless need to have a good working knowledge of the languages of the region, such as Aramaic, Syriac and Hebrew, and the cultural context contemporary to the revelation and the later compilation of the Qur'an to create a meaningful target text. An example of this is the fact that the cities Sodom and Gomorrha are called Al-Mu'tafika in the Quran. Furthermore, since the enigma is a significant part of the religious, persuasive power of the Quran, the loss of all uncertainties would result in a very different effect on the reader. Moreover, Bultemeier stresses that the Quran contains many features that are untranslatable. He gives oaths as an example. Bultemeier emphasises that no language in the world has the feature of swearing oaths like the Arabic of the Quran. Therefore

any translation will fail to render the same meaning and to retain the beauty of the expressions. He concludes that taking into consideration the eloquent and rhetoric expressions of the Quran as well as style clear that the Quran is untranslatable. Guillaume (1990: 73) supports Bultemeier. He ascertains that "the Quran is one of the world's classics, which cannot be translated without grave loss. It has a rhythm of peculiar beauty and cadence that charms the ear".

Hasanuddin Ahmad (1996 ch10: 5) argues that it is not possible to keep the artistic beauty and grandeur of the original text of the Quran in other languages. He demonstrates his argument by referring to the translations of the Quran. Ahmad asserts that all the translations of the Quran suffer from inherent shortcomings and limitations; therefore it is difficult to achieve the precise meaning of the Quran through translation. Ahmad (1996) attributes the failure in translating the Quran to a number of reasons. One of these reasons is the translator. He believes that any translator of any language will fail to render the lofty language of the Quran. He states that "No matter how hard the translator tries, his achievement will fall short of his own estimation and will hardly do justice to the original text of the Qur'an." Ahmad adds that Quranic terminology is a full ray of light. When a translator looks at it through the prism of an imperfect equivalent or a modern analytical language, he misses a great deal of its meaning by confining his attention to one particular tinge. He argues that, when a translation is done, a translator will narrow down the meaning of the Quran to a limited extent in a foreign language. This means missing out other and perhaps more important dimensions of the original terms of the Quran. So, no human being can possibly be adequate to convey the highest spiritual thoughts such as those in the Quran. In addition to this, translators are usually guided by their predecessors. To support his opinion, Ahmad concludes by quoting Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi who says in his book Maariful Quran (1998) that "The difficulty is increased hundred fold when one has to render into English, with any degree of accuracy and precision, a work so rich in meaning, so pithy in expression, so vigorous in style and so subtle in implications as the Holy Qur'an. To reproduce even partially its exotic beauty, wonderful grandeur and magical vivacity without scarifying the requirement of the English idiom and usage, is the despair of the translator and an ideal impossible of attainment. The result is that every fresh attempt at translating the Holy Writ brings home, in varying degrees, the truth of the old saying that nothing is so unlike an original as its copy".

2.4 The need for the translation of the Quran

According to Muslim belief, the Quran was revealed universally to all nations around the globe and across time. As a result, Islam spread from Arab countries into the neighbouring regions where Arabic was not spoken. Therefore, Muslims felt that it was necessary to translate the meaning of the Quran for the benefit of those newly converted who did not understand Arabic in order to let them understand their religion. Salman Alfarisi was the first translator, rendering the first chapter into Farsi when new Persian converts asked him to translate some of the Quranic verses. This is permissible since the Prophet Muhammad did not reject it (Abou Sheishaa 2001).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the need to translate the meaning of the Quran was debated seriously amongst Muslim scholars. Most of them called for the translation of the meaning of the Quran for several important reasons. These are:

1 As Al-Maraghi (1936) states, the need to translate the Quran become pressing after it was noticed that many translations of the Quran were done by non-Muslims, whether missionaries or Orientalists, and contained many mistakes, which in turn led to a misunderstanding of the meanings of the Quran. Al-Maraghi called for the making of a translation containing precise and adequate meanings of the Quran which would counteract the corrupt translations.

2 Abou Sheishaa (2001) mentions that some sectarian movements within Islam or renegade groups outside the fold of Islam, such as the Qadianis, were active in translating the Quran into European languages to proclaim their ideological uniqueness. He believes that these sectarian translations present a great danger of distorting the Quran. Therefore, he invited Muslim scholars to counter this danger by producing faithful translations in these European languages.

3 It is necessary to spread the Islamic faith, as a universal message. Muslim scholars and preachers, invited translations of the meaning of the Quran to be carried out into all tongues in order to give non-Muslims the opportunity to read and digest the Quran. By doing this, the translations of the meaning of the Quran would change or remove the corrupt thoughts which cultural conflict imperialism had introduced into the minds of Westerners.

4 To give non-Arab Muslims the opportunity to understand the meaning of the Quran in their languages.

2.5 Permissibility of translating the Quran

The translation of the Quran from Arabic into other languages has been a controversial issue among Muslim scholars since the dawn of Islam. Some of these scholars denied the permissibility of translating the Quran, arguing that the Quran is untranslatable and/or that the result is no longer the Quran, because the Quran is the Word of God revealed in a specific Arabic form. Others had a different point of view; they argued that the Quran can be translated without causing any harm to the original text. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the issue of translating the Quran was debated more seriously and objectively for two main reasons. Firstly, Muslim scholars wanted to improve the translations of the Quran rendered by non-Muslim translators, and secondly, Muslims had ambitions to further propagate Islam among non-Arab communities. In this section, the most prominent opinions will be discussed.

One of the earliest Muslim scholars who discussed and opposed the translatability of the Quran is Al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali (1072) wrote a treatise on the attributes of God, suggesting a theological argument that may well be taken to mean that the Quran is not translatable, or must not even be translated by a Muslim. He insists that believers must abstain from making any change to the Arabic wording of what has been transmitted to them, or translating its meaning into any other language. He definitely considers it unlawful to relate any material except in the authentic original, for some of the Arabic words have no equivalent in any other language, while some have equivalents, but other languages are not accustomed to use Quranic words metaphorically as Arabs do. In the opinion of al-Ghazali, the danger of a change of wording or translation is that it affects the divine attributes, a danger which must be avoided by strict adherence to the Arabic (Tibawi 1962).

A more recent opponent of translating the Quran is Sheikh Muhammad Shakir. In 1925, Sheikh Shakir wrote a book entitled "'Al-Qawl al-Fasl fi Tarjamat al-Qur'an al-Karim 'ila al-Lughat al-A'jamiyya". In this book, he condemned those persons making demands for a translation of the Quran and any attempt to translate the Quran. He compared the translation from one language to another to substituting one expression for another in the same language, in the sense that a balance of meaning must be preserved between the original and the translation, and between one phrase and another. Shakir argues that "To translate the Quran, literal and metaphorical meaning,

in addition to the syntactical mode of expression must be the same in the target language" (sic.) (quoted in Abou Sheisha 2001). He states that this is impossible and any translation will fail to convey the sense of the original. Shakir believes that no one can even change or replace any word in the Quran even in Arabic. He gives an example with the word "walad" in chapter 'Al 'Imran (4: 47) and "ghulam" in chapter Maryam (19: 20), stating that all Muslims agree that we are not at liberty to read in both chapters either "walad" or "ghulam", nor put one of these words in place of the other in either of the two chapters despite the fact that the two words have the same meaning. He then stresses that if this kind of change of one expression for another in the language of the Quran itself is forbidden to all Muslims, then such a change as would be implied by the transference of all the words in the sacred text from Arabic into any foreign language is much more strictly forbidden. Shakir warned that if the Quran is translated into different languages, the translations will differ from one to another. In this case, Muslims will face a great challenge of correction and revision. He also stated that the appropriate way to propagate the religion of Islam is by means of what the Book brought and spread among peoples and nations, in spite of the diversity of their languages, for it does not depend upon translations (Abou Sheisha 2001).

In the same year (1925), Sheikh Hasanayn Makhluf, former Mufti of Egypt, published a treatise entitled "Risala fi Hukm Tarjamat al-Qur'an al-Karim wa-Qira'atihi wa-Kitabatihi bi-ghayr al-Lughati al-'Arabiyya". According to Abou Sheisha (2001), Makhluf wrote this treatise to comment on and support Sheikh Shakir's book. Firstly, he distinguished between three kinds of translation. These are; equal literal translation, unequal literal translation, and interpretative translation. He states that the first, i.e. word for word translation which is identical to the original in its composition, style and rhetoric, is out of the question, for there is a consensus among scholars that it is unimaginable and impossible to achieve. He also states that interpretative translation is not a translation of the words of the original but of their interpretation, in other words, it is an interpretation of or commentary on the Quran in another language. Sheikh Makhluf maintains that this translation is unanimously permissible provided that it is based on sound Prophetic traditions, knowledge of the sciences of Arabic, and of other Quranic sciences which are required for the interpretation of the Quran.

Regarding unequal literal translation, Sheihk Makhluf (1925) says that in this kind of translation, translators try to replace each word by its equivalent in the target language as far as possible and thus it is not necessary to preserve the characteristics of the original in the translation. He goes on to explain that this has occurred in the various translations made by Orientalists since the time they commenced translating the Quran in the eleventh century. The purpose of the majority of them, he says, was to damage it, distort its composition, and change its meanings. Then he states that this kind of translation is unlawful, arguing that God and His Messenger took the responsibility of protecting and guarding the composition and style of the Quran and ordered us to protect it. Therefore, any act that contradicts this protection is evil, for it paves the way to its alteration and distortion. In this sense, the translation is an aggression against God and His Messenger and an alteration of His Book. The same applies to interpretative translation if it deviates from the Sunna of the Prophet, the basic sciences and principles of interpretation upon which the commentators relied.

Sheikh Makhluf supports Sheikh Shakir's opinion that the method of conveying and propagating the message of Islam to all humans is through explaining the principles of Islam that were brought by the Quran and which were embodied in the life story of the Prophet which can be expressed in all languages without any need for translation of the Quran. He concluded that unequal literal translation is unlawful; interpretative translation is permitted provided that it is based on a valid interpretation of the Quran; and that spreading Islam to all human beings is not dependant on the translation of the Quran but on a sound translation of the principles of Islam.

In contradiction to previous theories, we find that there are Muslim scholars advocating the idea of translating the Quran. For example, Sheikh Muhammad Mustafa al-Maraghi, former Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, advocated the translation of the Quran and expressed the opinion that it is absolutely permissible in a treatise first published in 1932 in Nur Al-Islam magazine under the title of "Bahth fi Tarjamat al-Qur'an al-Karim wa-'Ahkamiha". In his argument, Al-Maraghi refers to al-Shatibi, Ibn Hajar, and al-Zamakhshari's opinions. Al-Maraghi (1932) states that al-Shatibi (790) argues that "it is possible to translate the Qur'an, if the absolute meaning alone is considered, since by common agreement of all Muslims it is permissible to comment on it, and this agreement on its interpretation (*tafsir)* was an argument for the legitimacy of its translation". Al-Maraghi went on to maintain that translation is similar to commentary in that both are meant

to explain the meanings and purposes of the Quran in other words. The only difference is that the commentator uses Arabic while the translator uses a non-Arabic language. Since it is possible that a commentator be wrong or right in expressing the meanings, the same possibility should be accepted in respect to translation as long as the commentator and translator possess the required qualifications.

Al-Maraghi (1932) also quoted al-Zamakhshari's (1144: 366) commentary in his book "Al-Kashshaf" on verse (14: 4) in which he stated, "If you argue that the Messenger of Allah was not sent to the Arabs alone but to all mankind...who speak different languages, so that if the Arabs could not make any plea (of ignorance) others could, then I would say this: The Qur'an could have been revealed either in all the numerous languages, or only in one language. If the revelation were to be communicated in all languages, it would lead to needless repetition, since translation could serve as a substitute for such repetition. Hence it was revealed to the Prophet in the language of his own people, to whom he was sent, at the preliminary stage of the call to Islam. Once these people came to understand comprehensively the meaning of this message, they took the task of transmitting it to the rest of mankind throughout the world. This is evident in all non-Arab countries, where Muslims get their instruction in the Qur'an through translations in their native tongues..." Furthermore, al-Maraghi stated that Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (817) in his commentary on "Sahih al-Bukhari" under the chapter entitled "Nazala al-Qur'an bilisan Quraysh wal-'Arab...states "[The Qur'an was revealed in the language of Quraysh and the Arabs...] quoted Ibn Batal who said, "The Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic tongue but this does not contradict the fact that the Prophet was sent to all peoples because he conveyed it [the Revelation] to the Arabs and they in turn would translate it to non-Arabs in their own tongues".

Al-Maraghi then turned his attention responding to the arguments of the opponents of the translation of the Quran due to its inimitability. He stated that the majority of Muslim scholars consider that the inimitability of the Quran consists in the excellence of its literary composition. Therefore, no translation could transfer both the meaning and literary style of the Arabic text to the target languages, but this does not mean that it is impossible to transfer the meaning. The inimitability of the literary style is still preserved in the Arabic text for Arabs and non-Arabs who read the Arabic text. Then al-Maraghi argued that if the inimitability of the Quran lies in the fact that it contained certain predictions of the future, as some believe, then the translation can convey

this proof, for this aspect of inimitability is connected to the meaning not to the wording. Al-Maraghi then stressed that the translations cannot be called Quran and thus, if they are changed or happen to differ from one another, this has nothing to do with the Arabic text which is preserved against any change or alteration as Allah promised. It is, he continued, the official text, which must be resorted to in case of differences, and is the criterion for judging any translation.

Another prominent scholar who supported Al-Maraghi's opinion is Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut. Shaltut (1936), a former Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, wrote an article entitled "Tarjamat al-Qur'an wa-Nusus al-'Ulama' fiha" in the al-Azhar Journal expressing his attitude regarding the translation of the Quran. First, he explained that he noticed that many translations of the Quran were made by non-Muslims and contained many mistakes, which in turn led to a misunderstanding of the meanings of the Quran. He called for the making of a translation containing precise and adequate meanings of the Quran, which could then be spread all over the world, so that the guidance and principles of Islam would be propagated, and it would replace the corrupt translations. Shaltut believes that equal literal translation, which is intended to preserve the inimitability and excellence of the literary composition of the original, was out of the question, for it is impossible and beyond human ability. As for unequal literal translation and interpretative translation, he stated that neither of them could convey the inimitable aspects of the Quran, so such translations were not the Quran or its equal. He emphasized that the existence of either of these two kinds of translation neither challenges the inimitable aspects of the Quran nor suffices to convey its purpose. However, he stressed that the inimitability of the Quran consists not only in its rhetoric and literary composition, but also in that it contains certain predictions of the future, which could not be perceived except through revelation, as well as distinctive codes of laws and social and ethical principles, which no one could say were capable of invention either wholly or partially by an unlettered man. Shaltut believes that if the translation could not transfer the inimitable rhetoric and composition, it could transfer the other great aspects of inimitability, which are connected to the original meanings, and thus humanity should not be deprived of them.

To support his argument, Shaltut quoted other Muslim scholars' statements. He stated that both Sheikh Bakhit (former Mufti of Egypt from 1915 to 1920) and Sheikh Muhammad Hasanayn al-'Adawi held that Muslim jurists agreed on translating the meanings of the Quran for instruction and propagation. Furthermore, he quoted Sheikh Bakhit to the effect that the translation of the

meaning of the Quran was a collective duty to protect the Quran against any alteration or invalid translation. Then as a Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Shaltut stated that it is the duty of the Corps of High Scholars to write a simplified interpretation of the Quran which should be translated into all Eastern and Western languages so that the corrupt thoughts which imperialism introduced in the minds of the children of Muslims would be removed.

A very important verdict concerning the permissibility of translating the Quran was issued by the prominent Muslim scholar Rashid Rida. In 1926, he announced his verdict regarding on this matter. His verdict was "A literal translation of the Qur'an which is identical to the original text is impossible ...., The translation of the meaning is nothing but the translator's understanding of the Qur'an or an understanding for which he may perhaps have relied on the understanding of its commentators. This translation will then not be the Qur'an but the understanding of an individual who may be right or wrong in his understanding and so the aim of translation in the sense that we reject [namely, to make the translation as a substitute for the original] will not be realized" (quoted in Abou Sheishaa 2001: 7).

It can be concluded that all Muslim scholars stress the fact that the style of the Quran is inimitable and that it is impossible to transfer this inimitable aspect into a translation. At the same time, none of the major scholars of the 19th or 20th century opposed the translation of the meanings of the Quran for non-Muslims for the purpose of enabling them to have knowledge of the message of Islam. Therefore, we can say that no translation of the meaning of the Quran will ever serve as a substitute for the original, and the inimitability of the Quran is reserved for its original Arabic text.

2.6 Survey and assessment of the translations of the Quran into English

On account of its global importance, the Holy Quran has been translated into most of the major world languages. The first rendering into a western language was into Latin in 1143 and was done by an English scholar named Robertus Renenensis. This version was published in 1543 in Basle in Switzerland. Later on, some Western translators rendered the Quran into their own languages by means of the Latin version. Unfortunately, these translations are full of mistakes and mistranslations due to the fact that they were translated from a non-Arabic text and for other

reasons. English was the most important language among these languages. The first translation of the Quran into English was done by Alexander Ross in 1649, but this version was very weak because it was translated from the Latin version. In 1743 a translation of the Quran into English direct from Arabic was done by George Sale. This translation remained in extensive use by English readers for about 150 years.

In the twentieth century, more than 40 translations of the Quran were done into English. These were rendered either by different translators of different Muslim sects or by non-Muslim English native speakers. It is obvious that each translation is affected by the canon of the translator. The sects are Sunnis, Shiites, Qadiyanis and Christians. Therefore, this survey looks at and divides the translations of the Quran according to each sect. The most prominent translations will also be assessed. This survey covers firstly the Sunni translations as listed below. They are listed according to years of publication.

1) Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan, *The Holy Qur'an*, (Patiala 1905) with short notes based on the Holy Quran or the authentic traditions of the Prophet, and/or New Testaments or scientific truth. All fictitious romance, questionable history and disputed theories have been carefully avoided.

2) Hairat Dehlawi, *The Koran Prepared,* (Delhi, 1912) produced by various Oriental learned scholars and edited by Mirza Hairat Dehlawi. This is intended as 'a complete and exhaustive reply to the manifold criticisms of the Koran by various Christian authors such as Drs. Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Sir W. Muir'.

3) Mirzal Abu'l Fadl, *Qur'an, Arabic Text and English Translation Arranged Chronologically with an Abstract* (Allahabad, 1912).

4) Muhammad Marmaduke William Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an,* (London, 1930). Pickthall was an English man of letters, who embraced Islam, and holds the distinction of bringing out a first-rate rendering of the Quran in English. It keeps scrupulously close to the original and is one of the most widely used English translations; it provides scant explanatory notes and background information. This obviously restricts its usefulness for an uninitiated reader

of the Quran (Kidwai 1987).

5) Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* (Lahore, 1934-37). This is perhaps the most popular translation, and stands as another major achievement in this field. A civil servant by vocation, Yusuf Ali was not a scholar in the classical Muslim tradition. According to Khaleel (2005) some of his copious notes, particularly on hell and heaven, angels, jinn and polygamy, etc. are informed with the pseudo-rationalist spirit of his times. His overemphasis on things spiritual also distorts the Quranic worldview. Against this is the fact that Yusuf Ali doubtless was one of the few Muslims who enjoyed an excellent command over the English language. It is fully reflected in his translation. Though his is more of a paraphrase than a literal translation, and it faithfully represents the sense of the original.

6) Abdul Majid Daryabadi's *The Holy Qur'an: with English Translation and Commentary* (Lahore, 1941-57). This writer is fully cognate with the traditional Muslim viewpoint. This is a faithful rendering, supplemented with useful notes on historical, geographical and eschatological issues, particularly the illuminating discussions on comparative religion. Though the notes are not always very exhaustive, they help to dispel doubts in the minds of Westernized readers. However, this translation contains inadequate background information about the chapters of the Quran and some of his notes need updating (Kidawi 1987).

7) Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdud, *The Meaning of the Qur'an* (Lahore, 1967). According to Kidawi (1987) this work is an interpretative rendering of the Qur'an which succeeds remarkably in recapturing some of the majesty of the original. Since Mawdudi, a great thinker, enjoyed rare mastery over both classical and modern scholarship, his work helps one develop an understanding of the Quran as a source of guidance. Apart from setting the verses/chapters in the circumstances of its time, the author constantly relates, though exhaustive notes, the universal message of the Quran to his own time and its specific problems. His logical line of argument, generous sensibility, judicious use of classical Muslim scholarship and practical solutions to the problems of the day combine to show Islam as a complete way of life and as the Right Path for the whole of mankind.

8) Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Noble Qur'an* (Chicago, 1977): Explanatory English Translation of the Holy Quran: A Summarized Version of Ibn Kathir supplemented by At-Tabari with Comments from Sahih al-Bukhari. This version is the most widely disseminated Quran in most Islamic bookstores and Sunni mosques throughout the English speaking world. This new translation is meant to replace the Yusuf Ali's edition. It is noticeable that this translation includes numerous interpolations which make this version particularly problematic, especially for American Muslims who, in the aftermath of 9-11, are struggling to show that Islam is a religion of tolerance. According to Khaleel (2005) from the beginning, Al-Hilali and Khan translation reads more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic and anti-Chrstian polemic than rendition of the Islamic scripture.

9) The Message of the Quran by Muhammad Asad (Gibraltar, 1980). This represents a notable addition to the body of English translations expressed in chaste English. This work is nonetheless weakened by deviation from the viewpoint of Muslim orthodoxy on many counts. Refusing to take some Quranic statements literally, Asad denies the occurrence of such events as the throwing of Abraham into the fire, Jesus speaking in the cradle, etc. He also regards Luqman, Khizr and Zulqarnain as 'mythical figures' and holds unorthodox views on the abrogation of verses. These blemishes apart, this highly readable translation contain useful, though sometimes unreliable background information about the Quranic chapters and even provide exhaustive notes on various Quranic themes (Khaleel 2005).

10) The Qur'an: The First American Version (Vermont, 1985) by Thomas Irving. The translator is an American convert to Islam who changed his name to Ta'lim 'Ali. He marks the appearance of the latest major English translation. Apart from the inelegant title, the work lacks textual and explanatory notes. Using his own arbitrary judgment, Irving has assigned themes to each Quranic Ruku' (section). Although modern and forceful English has been used, it is not altogether free of instances of mistranslation and loose expressions. With American readers in mind, particularly the youth, Irving has employed many American English idioms, which, in places, are not suitable for the dignity of the Quranic diction and style. The translation has never been in great demand, and since Irving's death in 2002, there can be no revision; so, it is likely that, without the interest and subsidy from Islamic institutions, the version will simply be another forgettable effort (Khaleel 2005).

11) *The Noble Quran:* By Abdalhaqq and Aisha Belwey (1999). This version is translated into a modern style of English. The English is fluent and the manner in which the verses are laid out makes for easy reading. This translation has some problems with references and transferring cultural elements of the Quran into English. This makes some of the translated verses ambiguous to the English reader

12) *An Interpretation of the Quran.* Majid Fakhry (2002). New York University Press, New York. This translation uses contemporary English and it includes both the Arabic and English texts.

13) *The Qur'an,* by Muhammad. A. S. Abdel Haleem (2005) is one of the latest translations into English by an Arab Muslim translator. This new translation of the Quran is written in contemporary language that remains faithful to the meaning and spirit of the original, making the text clear while retaining all aspects of this great work's eloquence. The translation is accurate and completely free from the old fashioned language, incoherence, and alien structures that mar existing translations. Abdel Haleem includes notes that explain geographical, historical, and personal allusions as well as an index in which Quranic material is arranged into topics for easy reference. His introduction traces the history of the Quran, examines its structure and stylistic features, and considers issues related to militancy and intolerance.

14) *The Gracious Qur'an: a Modern-Phrased Interpretation in English.* This version was translated by Al-Azhar lecturer Dr. Ahmad Zaki Hammad (2007). It was published by Lucent Interpretations LLC, Chicago, USA. It comes in a two volume set, both volumes containing detailed essays and notes, and an English translation along with the Arabic text. This translation also has a comprehensive introduction, general notes, substantive indexes, and forwarded by Dr. Yusuf Al-Qardawi.

In addition to the above, there are also a number of other English translations by Sunni Muslims, which, however, do not rank as significant ventures in this field. They may be listed as:

15) Al-Hajj Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar, *Translation of the Holy Qur'an* (Singapore, 1920)
16) Ali Ahmad Khan Jullundri, *Translation of the Glorious Holy Qur'an with commentary*

(Lahore, 1962)

17) Abdur Rahman Tariq and Ziauddin Gilani, *The Holy Qur'an Rendered into English* (Lahore, 1966)

18) Syed Abdul Latif, *Al-Qur'an: Rendered into English* (Hyderabad, 1969)

19) Hashim Amir Ali, *The Message of the Qur'an Presented in Perspective* (Tokyo, 1974)

20) Rashad Khalifa's *The Qur'an: The Final Scripture (Authorized English Version)* (Tucson, 1978)

21) Muhammad Ahmad Mofassir, *The Koran: The First Tafsir in English* (London, 1979)

22) Mahmud Y. Zayid, *The Qur'an: an English Translation of the Meaning of the Qur'an* (checked and revised in collaboration with a committee of Muslim scholars) (Beirut, 1980)

23) S.M. Sarwar, *The Holy Qur'an: Arab Text and English Translation* (Elmhurst, 1981).

24) Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation* (Karachi, 1984).

It is noticeable that the Shiite doctrines are fully reflected in accompanying commentaries of the following books:

25) S.V. Mir Ahmad Ali, *The Holy Qur'an with English Translation and Commentary*, according to the version of the Holy Ahlul Bait includes 'special notes from Hujjatul Islam Ayatullah Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya Yazdi on the philosophical aspects of the verses' (Karachi, 1964).

26) M.H. Shakir, *Holy Qur'an* (New York, 1982).

27) Syed Muhammad Hussain at-Tabatabai, *al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*, translated from Persian into English by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (Tehran, 1983).

28) Illustrative of the Barelvi sectarian stance is *Holy Qur'an*, the English version of Ahmad Raza Khan Brailai's Urdu translation, by Hanif Akhtar Fatmi (Lahore, n.d.).

The Qadiyanis, though having abandoned orthodox Islam, have been actively engaged in translating the Quran. Apart from English, their translations are available in several European and African languages. The Qadiyani translations are as listed below:

29) Muhammad Ali's *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation* (Lahore, 1917) marks the beginning of this effort. This Qadiyani translator is guilty of unorthodox interpretation of several Quranic verses, particularly those related to the Promised Messiah, his miracles and Quranic angelology.

30) Similar distortions spoil another Qadiyani translation by Sher Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic Text with English Translation* (Rabwah, 1955). Published under the auspices of Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, second successor of the "Promised Messiah" and head of the Ahmadiyyas, this oft-reprinted work represents the official Qadiyani version of the Quran. Sher Sher Ali refers to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the "Promised Messiah" and provides clearly sectarian interpretation a number of Quranic verses (Kidwai 1987).

31) Zafarullah Khan's *The Qur'an: Arabic Text and English Translation* (London, 1970) ranks as another notable Qadiyani venture in this field. Like other Qadiyanis, Zafarullah too twists the Quranic verses to opine that the door of prophethood was not closed with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The obtrusion of similar unorthodox views upon the Quranic text is found in the following Qadiyani translations, too:

32) Kamaluddin and Nazir Ahmad, *A Running Commentary of the Holy Qur'an* (London, 1948).
33) Salahuddin Peer, *The Wonderful Koran* (Lahore,1960).
34) Malik Ghulam Farid, *The Holy Qur'an* (Rabwah, 1962).
35) Khadim Rahman Nuri, *The Running Commentary of the Holy Qur'an with under-bracket comments* (Shillong, 1964).
36) Firozuddin Ruhi, *The Qur'an* (Karachi, 1965).

Apart from the Qadiyanis, Christians have been the most active non-Muslim translators of the Quran. The origins of this tradition may be traced back to the anti-Islamic motives of Christian missionaries. Some of these ventures are far from being a just translation. They are full of transpositions, omissions, unaccountable liberties and unpardonable faults. These translations are listed below.

37) A very clear example of the Orientalist-missionary approach to the Quran is found in Alexander Ross's *The Alcoran of Mahomet translated out of Arabique into French, by the Sieur Du Ryer...and newly Englished, for the satisfaction for all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities* (London, 1649). In translating the Quran, the intention of Ross, a chaplain of King Charles I, was as he says; 'I thought good to bring it to their colours, that so viewing thine enemies in their full body, thou must the better prepare to encounter...his Alcoran.'

38) George Sale, a lawyer, brought out his "The Koran", commonly called *The Al Koran of Mohammed* (London, 1734), which was at the time the most popular English translation. Sale's exhaustive 'Preliminary Discourse', dealing mainly with Sira (Muhammad's life) and the Quran, betrays his deep hostility towards Islam and his missionary intent in that he suggests the rules to be observed for 'the conversion of Mohammedans' (q.v.). As for the translation itself, it abounds in numerous instances of omission, distortion and interpolations (Kidwai 1987).

39) Dissatisfied with Sale's work, J.M. Rodwell, Rector of St. Ethelberga, London, produced his translation *The Koran* (London, 1861). Despite refuting all sorts of wild and nasty allegations against the Prophet and the Quran in the Preface, Rodwell is guilty of having invented the so-called chronological chapter order of the Quran. Nor is his translation free from serious mistakes of translation and his own fanciful interpretations in the notes.

40) E.H. Palmer, a Cambridge scholar, was entrusted with the preparation of a new translation of the Quran for Max Muller's Sacred Books of the East series. Accordingly, his translation, *The Qur'an*, appeared in London in 1880. As to the worth of Palmer's translation, reference may be made to A. R. Nykl's article, 'Notes on E.H. Palmer's *The Qur'an*', published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 56 (1936) pp. 77-84 in which no less than 65 instances of omission and mistranslation in Palmer's work have been pointed out.

41) Richard Bell, Reader in Arabic, University of Edinburgh, and an acknowledged Orientalist produced a translation of the Quran with special reference to its chapter order, as is evident from the title of his work, *The Qur'an translated with a critical rearrangement of the Surahs* (Edinburgh, 1937-39). In addition to describing the Prophet as the author of the Quran, Bell also believes that the Quran in its present form was 'actually written by Muhammad himself' (p. vi). In rearranging the chapter order of the Quran, Bell, in fact, makes a thorough mess of the traditional arrangement and tries to point out 'alterations, substitutions and derangements in the text, (Kidwai 1987).

42) A.J. Arberry, a renowned Orientalist and Professor of Arabic at the Universities of London and Cambridge, is the most recent non-Muslim translator of the Quran. He acknowledged the orthodox Muslim view that the Qu'ran cannot be translated, but only interpreted. He rendered the

Qur'an into understandable English and separated text from tradition. The translation is without prejudice and is probably the best around. The Arberry version has earned the admiration of intellectuals worldwide, and having been reprinted several times. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted* (London, 1957) no doubt stands out above the other English renderings by non-Muslims in terms of both its approach and quality. Nonetheless, it is not altogether free from mistakes of omission and mistranslation, such as in *Al' Imran* 111:43, *Nisa' IV*: 72, 147 and 157, *Ma'ida V*: 55 and 71, *An'am VI*: 20, 105, *A'raf VII*: 157, 158 and 199, *Anfal VIII*: 17, 29, 41, 59, *Yunus X*: 88, *Hud XI*: 30 and 46 and *Yusuf XII*: 61 (Khaleel 2005).

43) N.J. Dawood is perhaps the only Jew to have translated the Quran into English. Available in the Penguin edition, Dawood's translation, *The Koran* (London, 1956) is perhaps the most widely circulated non-Muslim English translation of the Quran. The author's bias against Islam is readily noticeable in the Introduction. Apart from adopting an unusual chapter order in his translation, Dawood is guilty also of having mistranslated the Quran in places such as *Baqara II*:9 and *A'raf VII*:31, etc. (Kidwai 1987).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter showed the significance of the Quran to Muslims. Muslim scholars deem that the teachings of the Quran are universal, addressed to all people throughout the world regardless of their creed and colour and that the Quran was revealed to bring humanity from the darkness of ignorance into the light of guidance. This chapter also pointed out that all Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and translation theorists stress that the Quran is in many respects untranslatable. They have agreed that only the meaning of the Quran can be translated into other languages. The chapter also showed that Muslim scholars have ascertained that there is a pressing need to translate the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic for three reasons; namely, to counteract the corrupt translations produced by both sectarian translators and non-Muslims, to make the meaning of the Quran clear for those Muslims who do not know Arabic, and to give the opportunity to non-Muslims who do not know Arabic to read and digest the precise meaning of the Quran so that the corrupt thoughts which negative and inaccurate accounts of Islam have introduced into the minds of westerners will be changed or removed. Finally, this chapter presented a survey and brief assessment of the translations of the meaning of the Quran into

English produced by both Muslims and non-Muslims and discussed when each translation was produced.

Chapter Three

The effect of literal translation on the comprehensibility of text

"The emphasis on word-for-word translation distorts the sense and the syntax of the original."

Bassnett (1991:81)

3.1 Introduction

The notion of literal translation emerged as a topic of debate following attempts to translate the Holy Bible from Hebrew and Greek into European languages. Some Bible translators believed that a literal translation is the most accurate. They said that if a translation is not literal, it is not faithful to the original because the translator inserts his own opinion of the meaning of the original. They argued that all aspects of the language must be translated literally; word, idiom, grammar and style. Others believed that only words must be translated literally but the rendering must match and respect the TL grammar and syntax. The 20th century witnessed a radical change in translation principles. Literal translation was refuted by most translators who preferred the dynamic approach. Not only did translators adopt this concept, but also semanticists and psychologists. They stated that any translation that fails to convey the equivalent meaning of the original in a natural and intelligible text cannot be regarded a translation. However, some recent translators have argued in favour of literal translation. This chapter will study the effect of literal translation on the meaning and intelligibility of translated works. First, it will look at definitions of literal translation proposed by theorists in an attempt to understand it clearly. Second, it will shed light on some of the views of translation theorists about literal translation and its validity. Problems encountered in literal translation and ways of dealing with them will be considered. This chapter will also study the negative effects of literal translation on the comprehensibility of some verses of the Quran in English.

3.2 What is literal translation?

Translation theorists agree in general that literal translation occurs when the forms of the original text are retained as much as possible, even if those forms are not the most natural forms in the target language. Literal translation is sometimes called word-for-word translation. It also has other names; for example, Nida (2003) categorizes literal translation as formal equivalence, while Catford (1969) calls it rank-bound translation. Vinay and Darbelent (1995) categorize it as direct translation, while Dryden (1680) calls it metaphrase.

Those translation theorists who have considered literal translation have discussed it from a number of different points of view but have all reached the same general conclusion. Nida (2003: 159) states that literal translation is when the attention is focused on the message itself in both form and content. In this kind of translation, the translator is concerned with such correspondence as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept. He adds that one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should mirror as closely as possible the direct elements in the source language. Nida explores that the type of translation which most completely typifies this structural equivalence might be called a "gloss translation" in which the translator attempts to produce as literally and meaningfully as possible the form and content of the original. So, according to Nida, literal translation attempts to reproduce several formal elements including grammatical units and consistency in word usage and meaning in terms of the source context. He (ibid: 165) adds that the reproduction of grammatical units may consist in A) translating noun by noun, verb by verb, etc. B) keeping all phrases and sentences intact (not splitting up and readjusting the unit) : and C) preserving all formal indicators, e.g. marks of punctuation, paragraph breaks and poetic indentation.

Catford (1965: 27) identifies literal (formal) translation as when "any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the same place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL." But in this sense Catford adopts a different view from others. He argues that grammar can match the target language. He (ibid: 25) says "Literal translation starts from a word-for-word translation, but makes changes in conformity with TL grammar inserting additional words and changing structures at any rank." He stresses the idea that word-for-word translation tends to remain

lexically the highest probability lexical equivalence for each lexical item. This is also the view taken by Dickins, Hervey and Higgins. They (2002: 16) argue that "literal translation is when the denotative meaning of words is taken as if straight from the dictionary (that is, out of context), but TL grammar is respected." Vladimir Nobokov (1975: viii) describes literal translation as "rendering, as closely as the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original". Finally, in a similar vein, Hatim (1997: 227) identifies literal translation as "a rendering which preserves surface aspect of the message, both semantically and syntactically, adhering closely to source-text mode of expression."

3.3 Views of literal translation

Apparently, those translation theorists who are most in favour of literal translation are typically Bible translators or those who are affected by them; for example, Jay N. Forrest is affected by old Bible translators but he contradicts them in the matter of grammar and readability. He (2003) believes that the objective of any good translation should be to produce the most literal translation possible in the most readable way. This means that the translator must follow or represent the exact words of the original text. Forrest refers to R. C. Sproul, who says, "the only way to believe anything in the scripture is to believe it literally because the word literal means as it is written." He claims that any dynamic translation must be avoided because it is partly based upon the translator's understanding and interpretation and sometimes they go beyond their roles. In his argument, Forrest refers to translations of the Bible where there is little agreement among the many translations of the Bible on the market today. He attributes the reason to the dynamic approach and because each translator gives their interpretation of the Scripture. He supports his claim by saying that "in actual study of several literal translations it was found that they were in almost complete agreement." Forrest calls for the principle of D. A. Carson who states that "the closer one stands to the loose end, the greater the chance of subjective bias" (ibid). He then comments on Carson by saying "the closer one stands on the literal end, the less change of subjective bias." Forrest points out that dynamic translation can be helpful as a commentary on the text but the original must be translated literally.

One of the recent prominent and enthusiastic supporters of literal translation is Peter Newmark. He believes that the only way to be faithful to the original text and to transfer the same meaning is by literal translation. He (1991: 125) states "When you ask how close, how faithful, how true a version is in translation to the original, you can have nothing else in mind except the spirit of the original, which is the reverse of concrete." Newmark argues that literalism is a form of controlling the style and securing the message. He (ibid: 124) asserts that "If the genius or the particular of the foreign language is to be preserved, clearly and straight, only two procedures can preserve it, transference and literal translation." He (ibid: 44) adds that "Literal translation can show up the depth of one nation's culture by converting it into words where emotions that have no target language connotations are exposed in their absurdity and grotesqueness." Newmark ends his argument by saying that the translator must be faithful to the author not out of loyalty to him, but because the readership wants to know exactly what the author wrote. Therefore, the translator has no right to translate the original text connotatively or change the style. Logbook (1992:134) also asserts this conception of translation. He agrees with Newmark saying "The person who desires to turn a literary masterpiece into another language has only one duty to perform, and this is to produce with absolute exactitude the whole text, and nothing but the text, The term "literal translation" is tautological since anything but that is not truly a translation but an imitation, an adaptation or a parody" (quoted in Baker 1998: 125).

It should be made clear that the arguments of some of those who support literal translation are theoretical and they failed to produce a sound translation. Mathew Arnold (1862), for example was a prominent exponent of the literal tendency in translation. He insisted upon close adherence to the form of any original. He was quite unwilling to accept the idea that any translation should have essentially the same effect upon the average reader as it had for the original receptor. Arnold tried to reproduce Homer in English hexameter. The words are English but the grammar is not; and the sense is lacking. Therefore, his work failed to contribute to his argument and the result was poor (Nida 2003:20-1). Another example is Arias Montanus (1551). He translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Latin. He employed some of the most literal rendering imaginable. He did not hesitate to make up new Latin words in order to translate a Hebrew stem by a single corresponding Latin stem, and he flagrantly violated good canons of Latin usage. For example, in Genesis 1:20, his rendering "*replificent aquae reptile*" is no better Latin than the English parallel would be, "*let the waters reptilify the reptile*". Simply because the Hebrew verb in question was a

causative, Arias constructed a causative in Latin, but the formal parallelism completely distorted the meaningful relationship (Nida 2003: 22). Moreover, during the past fifteen years, a small group of translators has been putting out a so-called "Concordant Version in English" in which they have always attempted to translate the same Greek or Hebrew term by the same English word. They have also attempted to match grammatical forms and even to employ the same word order, if at all possible. Apparently, the results are lamentable; the attempt to be literal in the form of the message has resulted in grievous distortion of the message itself. So any observer who considers the literal translations of the Bible, and studies some other works carried out literally, can reach the conclusion that literal translation is frequently pointless and out of the question.

Although literal translation was espoused by some prominent translators, this approach was rejected by others. Dryden (1680), for example was one of the pioneers who was interested in translation and was one of the few translation theorists at the time who stood against literal translation. Dryden summarized his experience by classifying translation into three basic types:

1) Metaphrase; a word-for-word and line-for-line type of rendering
2) Paraphrase; a translation in which the author is kept carefully in view, but in which the sense rather than the words are followed
3) Imitation; in which the translator assumes the liberty not only to vary the words and sense, but also to leave both if the spirit of the original seems to require it. Dryden said quite frankly that "it is impossible to translate verbally and well at the same time. It is much like dancing on ropes with fettered legs. A man may shun a fall by using caution, but the gracefulness of motion is not to be expected." Dryden insists that "imitation and verbal version are in my opinion the two extremes, which ought to be avoided." (quoted in Nida 2003: 17). In the same era, Alexander Pope (1715) adopted very much the same position as Dryden, contending that "no literal translation can be just to an excellent original" (quoted in Nida, ibid: 18). George Campbell (1789) also agrees with Dryden and Pope in that he rejects the literal translation approach. He believes that any translation must be faithful to the original. He states that to be faithful to the original means to follow three steps. First, the translator must give a just representation of the original. Second, he must convey in his version as much as possible consistency with the genius of the language in which he writes of the author's spirit and manner. Thirdly, he must take care that the version has at least the quality of an original performance so as to appear natural and

easy.

In 1790, the Scottish theorist Alexander Fraser Tytler supported his predecessors who favoured free translation and opposed those who backed literal translation. He published a volume on "The Principles of Translation", in which he likewise set up three principles, as follows:

1) The translator should give a complete transcript of the idea of the original work.

2) The style and manner of the writing should be of the same character as that of the original.

3) The translation should have all the ease of the original composition. Tytler (1790: 22) permits addition in translation if it is wholly legitimate, that is, if it has the most necessary connection with the original thought, and actually increases its force. Likewise, he agrees with omission if words are confessedly redundant and their omission shall not impair or weaken the original thought. He even goes beyond this by giving sensible advice on problems of obscurities in the original text, saying that translators should exercise judgement and select the meaning which agrees best with the immediate context or with the author's usual mode of thinking. Tytler (1790: 113-4) explains the translator's function as a process in which he uses not the same colours as the original, but is required to give his picture the same force and effect. He is not allowed to copy the original, yet is required by touches of his own to produce a perfect resemblance. He must adopt the very soul of his author which must speak through his own organs (quoted in Nida ibid: 19).

In the modern era, Nida and Taber (1969: 16) strictly oppose the notion of literal translation. They argue that this kind of translation is unnatural and misleading. Their experience is a result of examining and analyzing the Bible translations and the consensus of a group of approximately fifty Bible translators who were asked to judge these renderings. They (ibid: 101) emphasize a basic principle that "Contextual consistency is more important than verbal consistency, and that in order to preserve the content it is necessary to make certain changes in form." They make it clear that there is not always formal equivalence between language pairs. They, therefore, suggest that these formal equivalents should be used wherever possible if the translator aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalence. They add that the use of formal equivalence might at times have serious implications in the target text since the translation will not be easily understood by the target audience. They (ibid: 201) assert that "typically, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the

message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labour unduly hard." Moreover, they (ibid: 99) attribute the falseness of choosing a literal translation approach to a problem in the mentality of translators. They argue that literal translation results from the fact that "some translators know so much about the subject that they unconsciously assume the readers will also know what they do, with the result that they frequently translate over the heads of their audience." As a result, this will lead to a distortion of the original. So, they stress that the translator must strive for equivalence rather than identity, that meaning must be given priority, for it is the content of the message which is of prime importance.

Mona Baker also rejects the idea of literal translation. She (1992: 11) states that "There is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages." She (ibid: 17) points out that literal translation is impossible in most cases. This is because the choice of suitable equivalence in a given text depends on a wide variety of factors. Some of these factors may be strictly linguistic. Others may be extra-linguistic. Consequently, it is not wise to just pick up words from the dictionary and put them denotatively in the target text. Baker (ibid: 12) asserts that "the ultimate aim of a translator, in most cases, is to achieve a measure of equivalence at text level, rather than at word or phrase level." Anton Popovic is of the same opinion as Baker. He believes that literal translation is misleading because translation is not a monistic composition, but an interpretation and conglomerate of two structures. On the one hand, there is the semantic content and the formal contour of the original. On the other hand, there is the entire system of aesthetic features bound up with the language of the translation. Popovic (ibid: 82) adds that "the translator will not strive to preserve all the singularities, but will try to find suitable equivalents in the "milieu" of his time and his society." (quoted in Holmes 1970: 80-2).

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins do not favour literal translation either. They (2002: 97) argue that in translation, lexical loss is very common, and this arises from the fact that exact synonymy between ST words and TT words is relatively rare. Basil (1997: 145) supports this opinion that it is not always guaranteed except in ultra-detached texts. He claims that "literal translation is most appropriate only for the ultra-detached kind of texts such as those encountered in legal documents".

Catford has a different point of view. He neither rejects literal translation completely nor adopts it

entirely. Catford (1965: 32), who has a preference for a more linguistic-based approach to translation, believes that formal (literal) translation can be achieved when SL and TL operate each with grammatical units at five ranks like English and French. The five ranks he sets are; sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. He then asserts that the final result is always approximate. Catford says that literal translation is difficult when translating into languages that do not have the same grammatical ranks. He gives Kabardian as an example because Kabardian ranks of grammar units differ from English.

Vladimir Nobokov (1964) has a completely different concept of literal translation. He identifies three modes of translation. The first is "paraphrastic", offering a free version of the original with omission and addition. The second is "lexical or (construction)", rendering the basic meaning of the words and their order. Nobokov's third mode is "literal". This mode renders as closely as possible the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allowing the exact contextual meaning of the original. Nobokov believes that this is the only true translation. He claims that literal translation implies adherence not only to the direct sense of a word or sentence, but to its implied sense; it is a semantically exact interpretation, and not necessarily a lexical one or a constructional one. He states that "a translation may be and often is, both lexical and constructional, but it is only literal when it is contextually correct, and when the precise nuance and intonation of the text are rendered". Textual semantics for the Nobokovian literalist thus consist of three interactive dimensions: 1) the range of association potential in the original language at the moment the work came into being, 2) the range of association delimited by the text as a self-consistent aesthetic structure, and 3) the new associations that, for good or ill, subsequent readers bring to the text - the socially and historically conditioned responses that constitute their appreciation of it (quoted in Portland, 1994: 13-29). It is apparent here that what Nobokov calls literal translation, other translation theorists categorize as dynamic or equivalence translation.

3.4 Problems of literal translation

Catford (1965: 94) states that "translation fails - or untranslatability occurs - when it is impossible to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the TL text. Broadly speaking, the cases where this happens fall into two categories. Those where the difficulty is linguistic and those where it is cultural". Catford is not the only one to believe this. Most translation theorists share this view. For example, Baker (1992) argues that, linguistically, literal translation poses problems on different levels. These levels are: word, idiom and style. In this section, these levels will be discussed briefly. In addition, culture will be considered briefly here.

3.4.1 Word

A word is defined by Bolinger and Sears (1968: 43) as "the smallest unit of language that can be used by itself" (quoted in Baker, 1992: 11), while Baker (ibid) identifies it in most written languages as "any sequence of letters with an orthographic space on either side". Dickins, Hervey, and Higgins (2002) state that literal translation poses a problem on the word level due to the fact that meanings are not found exclusively in the words listed individually in the dictionary. They add that "any text shows that the combination of words creates meanings that they do not have in isolation". In other words, once words are put into a context, their denotative meanings become more flexible. Moreover, literal translation causes lexical loss because exact synonymy between ST words and TT words is, in most cases different, as words acquire associative overtones on top of their denotative meanings. Nida and Taber add another problem that is posed on the word level which is word-to-many meanings. They argue that word-for-word translation is impossible due to the fact that one word in one language means a number of words in another. This can be true if we consider the Arabic word تيمّم *tayammum*. When translating this word into English, we need at least one paragraph to explain it fully. Baker (1992: 11-2) believes that a word is the basic issue in the translation process. She states that it should be remembered as a single word and can sometimes be assigned different meanings in different languages and might be translated as a more complex unit or even as a single morpheme. We can provide a funny example of literal translation between languages. In some languages of north Ghana, the phrase "he got married", is translated literally "he ate a woman." Another example, in Urdu, is the literal

translation of the phrase "I have lost my voice" as "my throat has sat down". It is clear that the results of these two examples are awkward and unintelligible.

Mark L. Strauss (1998) believes that it is impossible to achieve an equivalent meaning on the word level since words have connotative meanings as well as denotative ones. Strauss argues that a word generally has only one sense in any particular literary context. In literal translation, he believes that the translator looks at the denotative meaning which might not be the meaning intended by the writer. He believes that this distorts the original text and the target text becomes far from faithful to the original. Strauss gives the word "dog" as an example. He says that "the word dog denotes in English a furry, four-footed animal. The Greek word for dog (kyon) denotes the same thing. Yet when Paul warns the Philippians to "watch out for those dogs" (Phil 3: 2), the connotation of the word is much more negative." He says that "in the first-century Jews detested dogs and applied the term to the hated Gentiles" (ibid). So, Strauss warns of the danger of literal translation in that it would result in a change of the original meaning which misleads the reader. He stresses that context determines the meaning of the word and words shouldn't be rendered denotatively as they are found in the dictionary.

3.4.2 Strategies for translating words

According to most translation theorists, the ideal strategy for dealing with words in any text involves first analyzing them. Anton Popovic (1970: 79) argues that "the translation of a word is not performed directly." Baker (1992: 17) believes that a translator cannot translate any word without considering the context. A translator must analyze the context in order to perceive the meanings of the words and utterances very precisely in order to render them into another language. According to Baker, the translator must go beyond what the average reader has to do in order to reach an adequate understanding of a text. Once the translator has understood the meaning of the words of a sentence, he has to render the whole meaning of that sentence into the target language in a form that matches it. This is also what C.W.Orr (1941: 318) calls for. He has a philosophy that translation is in some respect equivalent to painting; the painter does not produce every detail of the landscape, he selects what seems best to him. Likewise, for the translator, it is the spirit, not only the letter that he seeks to embody in his own version (quoted in Nida, 2003: 162). The translator cannot simply match words from the dictionary; he must in a

real sense create a new linguistic form to carry the concept expressed in the source language (Nida, ibid). To sum up, translation cannot be carried out at the level of the word, but at least of the level of the sentence.

3.4.3 Idiom

Translating idioms and fixed expressions is not an easy task. This is because the understanding of any idiom depends on a good knowledge of the cultural, linguistic and connotative aspects of ST and TT. In addition idioms typically do not have transparent meanings. Hence, we can say that idioms are language and culture-specific. Baker (1992: 63) identifies idiom as "frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, often carry meaning which cannot deduced from its individual components." Baker (ibid: 65) points out that the main problems that idiomatic expressions pose in translation relate to two areas: a) the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly, and b) the difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom conveys into the target language. In other words, some idioms are misleading; they seem transparent because they offer a reasonable literal interpretation and their idiomatic meanings are not necessarily signalled in the surrounding text. Most idioms have both a literal and an idiomatic meaning. A translator who is not familiar with the idiom in question may easily accept the literal interpretation and miss the play on idiom.

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002) also claim that it is hard to transfer the meaning of any idiom literally. They give as an example an idiom from Arabic إللي فات مات *illi fa̱t ma̱t*. When they translated this idiom literally into English as *what passed died*, the result was awkward and the style was alien to English. To achieve equivalence, they replaced the original Arabic words with different ones in English to give the same meaning. The result was successful in that the rendering transferred the same meaning with natural syntax. The translation was *"let bygones be bygones"*. Nida and Taber (1969: 2) have the same point of view. They give two literally translated examples from the Bible to prove their argument. The two idioms are "children of the bridechamber" (Mark 2: 19) and "heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom 12: 20). They state that the average person unacquainted with semantic idioms is simply not going to understand that the "children of the bridechamber" are the friends of the bridegroom, or wedding guests, and that "heap coals of fire on his head" means to make a person ashamed of his behaviour, and is not a

way of torturing people to death.

3.4.4 Strategies for translating idioms

Baker (1992) suggests that once an idiom or fixed expression has been recognized and interpreted correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the target language. She states that the ideal way to translate an idiom is to find an idiom in the target language similar in meaning and form, as well as using equivalent lexical items. One of the best examples is "Hero from zero". If this English idiom is to be translated into Arabic, the translator has to find an equivalent idiom in Arabic that gives the same meaning and form with similar lexical items. The best choice might be بَطل مِن وَرَق *Baṯal min waraq*. Baker is convinced that this way is difficult for those translators who translate into foreign languages due to the fact that the translator's competence in using an idiom or fixed expression in the target language is rarely that of the native speaker. In this case, the translator has to choose an idiom which has a similar meaning in the target language but uses different lexical items. Baker gives an example of this. The English idiom "To carry coals to Newcastle" can be replaced with the French idiom "Porter de l'eau a la riviere" which means "To carry water to the river". We can find a similar idiom in Arabic that gives the same meaning with different items. It is بيبع ماء في حارة السقّاية *bibi̱' ma' fi ḫarat assaqqayah* (he sells water in the water sellers' street). Baker goes on to say that if the translator cannot find a match in the target language or it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target language text because of differences in stylistic preferences in the source and target language, he or she can paraphrase the idiom in an accurate way. If the three previous strategies fail, the translator can omit the idiom, but this shouldn't affect the overall meaning of the text (ibid 71-78).

3.4.5 Style

The literal translation of lexical words and idioms is not the only factor which influences the comprehensibility of the translated text. Another powerful factor is style. The Encarta Dictionary identifies style as "the way in which something is written or performed as distinct from the content of the writing or performance." It is well known that every language has its own style which differs from that of other languages, and if the style is alien, readability will be difficult, hence any attempt to reproduce the same style inevitably results in a serious loss or distortion of

the message. This is made clear by Nida and Taber (1969: 2) who point out that "if it is stylistically heavy, it makes comprehension almost impossible". So (ibid: 110), the attempt to preserve structural form usually results in either complete unintelligibility or awkwardness. Nida (2003: 2) asserts that in translation the message of the source language must be transferred in the style of the target language. He claims that "if the translator attempts to approximate the stylistic qualities of the original, he is likely to sacrifice much of the meaning, while strict adherence to the literal content usually results in considerable loss of the stylistic flavour". He (ibid: 157) stresses the fact that "only rarely can one reproduce both content and form in a translation, and hence, in general, the form is usually sacrificed for the sake of the content." For example, in a West African language, a stylistically literal translation of Jesus' words to James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" (MK10: 38) comes across as one drunkard challenging another to a drinking contest.

Style transference is much more complicated than word or idiom translation because grammatical rules are very hard to manipulate. Baker (ibid: 86) claims that differences in the grammatical features of the source and the target languages often result in changes in the informational content of the message during the process of translation. This can result in a significant misunderstanding of the message of the source language. The grammatical changes which result might affect word order, cohesion, sentence length, reference and punctuation. These features will be discussed briefly.

Word order is a very important feature in comprehensibility because it fulfils a number of different functions in different languages: syntactically, it may indicate the roles of subject, object, etc; semantically, it may indicate roles such as actor, patient, beneficiary; and communicatively, it tends to indicate the flow of information. Several linguists have suggested that different languages have different word-order systems, and any change will result in absolute confusion (Baker, ibid: 166). For example, English and Arabic differ in word order which may result in confusion for the reader. In English, the word order is:

Subject-verb-object I went home

But in Arabic the verb comes first. For example;

Verb-subject-object Went I to the home

The change of word order in English poses confusion because the new order, though ungrammatical in the example "went I home" suggests a question not a statement.
Adjectives and adverbs pose a problem as well. In Arabic, adjectives follow nouns and agree in gender and number. For example;
Man tall > pl > men talls, while in English adjectives come before nouns and do not agree in number or gender.
Tall man > pl > tall men.

Translation theorists and linguists point out that cohesion is a very important factor in understanding any text. Newmark (1987: 295) states that "the topic of cohesion...has always appeared to me the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation" (quoted in Baker 1992: 215). Baker (ibid: 180) defines cohesion as "the network of surface relations which link words and expressions to other words and expressions in a text". Cohesion is important because it helps the reader to interpret words and expressions by reference to other words and expressions in the surrounding sentence and paragraphs. In other words, if the text is not cohesive, readability will be compromised and the message will not be easily understood.

Arabic tends to have very long sentences, whose various clauses are arranged in a logically hierarchical fashion, that is, there will be a number of dependant clauses connected to an independent clause. This type of sentence structure is perfectly normal in Arabic and is called hypotactic (clauses are arranged logically under one another). English, by contrast, is not so comfortable with long sentences, and does not provide any easy way of indicating which clauses are dependent upon others. English structure tends to do paratactic (clauses are arranged logically alongside of one another). If a translator tries to reproduce in English the same length of sentence as the Arabic original, the English receiver may not be able to follow the translation. This causes confusion for the reader and he will not be able to digest the meaning of the original. Furthermore, long Arabic sentences usually include several references (pronouns), while in English, the use of more than two or three references in the same sentence causes ambiguity in the text. "In this case, it is better to use lexical references to ensure the intelligibility of the translated text" (Gordon 1985).

Similarly, punctuation poses real problems in translation due to the fact that each language has its own special punctuation rules. For example, English has a sophisticated punctuation system which can cause ambiguity if this system is transferred literally. Unlike English, Arabic uses commas between very long sentences and a full stop often occurs only at the end of paragraphs, so that a whole paragraph will often consist of one very long sentence. In addition, Arabic uses specific relatives and references to keep the long sentence cohesive (Baker ibid: 215). Hence, if the Arabic system of punctuation was transferred into a language such as English, the text would be confusing because the reader will not be able to determine the beginning and the end of the sentence. This will most certainly lead to difficulty in understanding the text.

3.4.6 Strategies for dealing with style

According to Nida and Taber (1969: 14), before rendering any text, a translator must remember that style is important but still a secondary matter. Their (ibid: 106) strategy for translating style is that it is advisable for a translator to endeavour to keep the same style when he can. In this case, they argue that the content must be transformed precisely because content must be preserved at any cost. If the translator cannot do this - and this is in most cases possible - he has to transfer the content in the natural form of the target language. Nida and Taber do not favour any attempt to keep the same style. They (ibid) argue that it is "obvious in any translation there will be a type of loss of semantic content". Hence, in order to minimize the loss, the style must match stylistic norms of the target language. Baker (ibid: 111) also suggests the same strategy. She states that "a good translator does not begin to translate until s/he has read the text at least once and got a 'gist' of the overall message. But this is only the first step. Once the source text is understood, the translator then has to tackle the task of producing a target version which can be acceptable as a text in its own right". The reason theorists prefer to reproduce the thought of the original without attempting to conform to its style is that all languages have their own style which differs from others. If a translator adheres to the original syntax, he produces a style which is abnormal or confusing. The result is an unreadable or unintelligible text.

3.4.7 Culture

Nida (2003: 171-2) argues that literal translation poses real problems in transferring culture. First, there may be no object or event in the receptor culture which corresponds to the same object in the source text. Rather the equivalent function is represented by another object or event. Nida gives the example "some people may have no experience of snow, and hence no word for it, but they may have a phrase "white as Kapok down" which is functionally equivalent to "white as snow"". He adds, "similarly, some people may not be able to understand a phrase such as "wagging their heads" as a sign of derision, since for them this is expressed by spitting". Second and on the other hand, one may find that the receptor culture does possess almost the same object or event as is mentioned in the source message, but in the receptor culture it may have an entirely different function. Nida gives an example that European languages use "heart" as the centre of the emotions and as the focal point of the personality; however, in other cultures the "heart" may have nothing to do with the emotions. Rather, one may speak of the "liver", "abdomen" or "gall".

Nida and Taber (1969: 110) claim that when there are differences between the functions of cultural forms in the ST and TT, it may be necessary to provide a certain amount of contextual conditioning. This will help in tackling the cultural gaps in the TL. They condition that alterations are not employed unless 1) the text is likely to be understood by the receptor, 2) the text is likely to have no meaning to the receptor, or 3) the resulting translation is so overloaded that it will constitute too much of a problem for the average reader to figure out. Cultural problems faced in translation and strategies for dealing with them will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

3.5 Some problems of literal translation of the Quran and their effect on the comprehensibility of its meaning

Muslim scholars and non-Muslim translators have agreed that translating the Quran is impossible mainly for linguistic and cultural reasons. They have agreed that only the meaning of the Quran can be translated. Therefore, some Muslim translators have tried to render the meaning of the Quran into English. However, the results of their works have not been fully satisfactory. The main problem is that most translators have translated some linguistic patterns literally. This has resulted in incomprehensibility of a large number of verses due to the fact that a meaning carried by a word in one language is not necessarily the same as that carried by the same word in other language. This point is emphasized by Akbar (1978: 3) who points out that "almost all existing English translations of the Quran suffer from the drawbacks of literal translation." He adds that these translations generally follow the archaic English of the Bible, which makes the meaning of the Quran unintelligible (Abdul-Raof 2001). The main features of these linguistic patterns such as words, idioms, word order and style will be considered here.

3.5.1 Word

Literal translation of some words in the Quran has failed to render the intended meaning of the original words clearly. This has badly affected the comprehensibility of the general meaning of the translated verses. The words that have been translated literally do not match the whole meaning of these verses because the connotative meaning of the original word defers from that of the target ones. Let us consider this example:

"Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women; and ***fear*** *God by whom you demand one of another, and the* ***wombs****; surely God ever watches over you."*

(Arberry 4: 1)

يا أيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

The wrong literal translation of the words "fear" and "wombs" has caused vagueness in this

verse. The verse cannot be understood by the English reader for two reasons. First, the reader will not grasp why he should fear wombs. Second, the reader will not understand the implicational meaning of the word "wombs". The word "fear" means here; be faithful and dutiful, and the metaphoric word "wombs" refers to female kinship (grandmother, mother, sisters, wife/s daughters, and nieces). So, God orders Muslims to be faithful and dutiful to God and all their kins especially the females. The literal translation of these two words resulted in a TT that is incomprehensible for readers. A translator who gives the wrong meaning in this way has fallen into a very common trap; he thinks that as long as he keeps the same words, he cannot be too far wrong with the meaning. Instead, what he has done is not translation at all, but the creation of ambiguity and a serious distortion of the Quran.

3.5.2 Idiom

It has been said earlier that translating idioms and fixed expressions is not an easy task, this applies to translating idioms and fixed expressions in the Quran. Idioms or fixed expressions must be interpreted before transferring the meaning into the target language. Unfortunately, some translations of the meaning of the Quran are not free from literal translation of some idioms. For this reason, some translators failed to transfer sensible and good works. This example illustrates this failure.

*"Then we **smote their ears** many years in the cave"* (Arberry 18: 11)

فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَى آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا

Arberry provides a too literal translation for the idiom فضَرَبنا على آذانِهم *fa darabn<u>a</u> 'al<u>a</u> <u>a</u>dh<u>a</u>nihim* as "we smote their ears". This literal rendering makes the verse unintelligible because it does not make any sense for the reader. In fact, this idiom means that God has sealed their ears so they do not hear any thing while they were sleeping in the cave" (Abdul-Raof 2001: 31). By contrast, any English reader of this translation would understand that God hit these devout people on their ears for many years in the cave. Consequently, the reader will have a bad idea either about God or about the Quran because he misunderstands the meaning.

3.5.3 Word-order

Another problem that causes difficulty in understanding the translation of the meaning of the Quran is word order. Word order (the linear arrangement of words) plays a very important role in the semantic, syntactic and rhetorical power of the Quran, but this power is Arabic-specific. This is to say, when the word order of the Quran is kept the same in the target language in order to preserve the same tone, the verses of the Quran lose their beauty and readability. Consequently, sensibility and comprehensibility will be missing. This example given by Abdul-Raof (ibid: 43) illuminates this argument:

"*O my Lord! Truly **am I in** (desperate) need of any good that Thou dost send me!* (Ali, 28: 24)

رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

By his literal translation, Abdul-Raof (ibid: 43) explains, Ali tries to keep the word order of this verse in English, but unfortunately, the meaning of the verse is not transferred well due to the conversion resulting in misplacing the pronoun "I". Consequently, the new word order in English changed the semantic and stylistic feature of the original. An English reader of this verse would understand that the speaker (Musas) wonders by asking his God, whether he is in need of what God gave him or not. While, the real meaning of the verse is completely deferent, Musas in the ST thanks his God for what He gave him, and says "O God, I am really in need of what You gave me!". So, this literal translation created misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the real meaning.

3.5.4 Style

Abdul-Raof (ibid: 181-2) argues that "the literal translation of the Quranic style in an attempt to optimize linguistic architectural charm produced ponderous and laboured style in English". This factor creats a difficulty in readability and understanding. So, when a reader reads the Quran in English, he struggles to understand and follow the meaning because this style is heavy and alien. This is clear in the following example.

"as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation (from the truth) they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking ***Al-Fitna*** *(polytheism and trials), and seeking for its hidden meaning, but none knows its hidden meaning save Allah.* ***And*** *those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "we believe in it; the whole of it (clear and unclear Verses) are from our Lord."*

(Al-Hilali and Khan 3: 7)

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

In this verse, Al-Hilali and Khan tried to preserve same stylistic form of the original, in order to give the reader an impression of the original text. This literal style produced a heavy and awkward style at the expense, also, of the meaning. In other words, the translator failed to achieve the primary task of translating the Quran which is delivering the meaning clearly. In this verse, according to Abdul-Raof (ibid: 32), the translator must break the first part of the verse (after 'God') then start a different sentence. Using the conjunction 'and' after God to relay Arabic 'و', results in ambiguity and misunderstanding. This conjunction makes the reader understand that those who are firmly grounded in knowledge are partners to God in knowing the hidden meaning. Unlike English, the conjunction 'و' (and) in Arabic has many functions, and its function in this verse is emphatic. This verse emphasizes that scholars believe entirely in God's knowledge because their knowledge of the greatness of God guides them to believe everything God says. Moreover, the vocalization system of Arabic determines who the subject is and who the object is. This fact is not given any attention here resulting in changing the meaning. The meaning becomes that God and those grounded in knowledge are subjects and alike. This has a disastrous result on the understanding of the reader.

3.5.5 Metaphor

Literal translation of metaphorical expressions in the Quran poses a real problem of comprehension because this approach fails to transfer the actual meaning into the target language. This is because the meaning of a metaphorical expression in the source language is not necessarily the same in the target language. If we consider the following examples, we will understand how the literal translation of metaphorical expressions in the Quran has created

ambiguity and caused incomprehensibility.

"*And keep not thy hand chained to thy neck, or outspread it widespread altogether, or thou wilt sit reproached and denuded.*" (Arberry 17: 29)

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَحْسُورًا

In this verse, God tells Muslims metaphorically to be balanced in spending money. This verse means that a person should not be a miser just hoarding money, neither wasteful spending all the money he earns, because in both cases he will definitely regret the result and be blamed. The verse is an invitation for Muslims to buy all what they need unextravagantly. In fact, it is impossible for an English reader to understand the meaning provided above. Abdul-Raof (2001: 27) points out that this literal translation makes the verse unintelligible due to the fact that the expression "don't keep your hand chained to the neck or spread it widespread altogether" does not give any sense to the English reader. This kind of problem makes Nida (2003: 219) recommend translating metaphors as non-metaphors since the particular extensions of meaning which occurs in the source language have no parallel in the receptor language.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we argued that literal translation is unnatural and misleading and can hardly do justice to the original; it distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and fails to transfer a precise meaning in a comprehensible message. This is why most translation theorists reject this type of translation. They argue that there is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages. They stress that the translator must strive for equivalence rather than identity, and that meaning must be given priority, for it is the content of the message which is of prime importance. This chapter showed that literal translation is most appropriate only for ultra-detached kinds of texts such as those encountered in legal documents. We also showed that literal translation poses problems on different levels: word, idiom, style and culture. Strategies for translation at the levels of word, idiom and style were considered. As culture is a wide and very important topic, chapter four will be dedicated to this domain. Finally, this chapter looked at the effect of literal translation on some translations of the meaning of the Quran into English. It showed how literal translation impedes

the transfer of a precise meaning and how it affects comprehensibility.

Chapter Four

Translating culture; Problems and filling the gap

"One does not translate language, one translates culture"

(Casagrande 1954: 338)

4.1 Introduction

It was shown in chapter three that literal translation is a serious weakness that impedes the rendering of comprehensible content; preserving the linguistic form of the original in a translation often results in incorrect or obscure meaning. Literal translation is not the only or even the most significant shortcoming that some translators exhibit in translation. Culture is thought by many scholars to pose the most difficult problems in translation. It can be more problematic for the translator than the semantic or syntactic difficulties of the text. Thus, this chapter studies problems of culture and strategies for tackling these problems. First, it discusses how culture is defined by anthropologists, sociologists and linguists. It also explains the relationship between culture and language and the importance of an awareness of culture in translation. It then goes on to discuss the significance of the translator as a cultural mediator. The chapter classifies situations where problems occur due to the difference between the cultures of the source and target texts. It principally studies the work of Nida and Newmark. It then looks at some effective strategies that have been established for tackling cultural problems. It studies the three most significant strategies proposed by Ivir (1987), Newmark (1991), and Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002).

4.2 What is Culture?

The word culture, according to Katan (1991: 17), originally comes from the Latin word 'cultus' which means in English 'cultivation' and 'colere' which means 'to till'. The metaphorical extension can easily be explained. Seeds continually absorb elements from the land, or rather the ecosystem, to ensure their development. In the same way, and unaware that they are doing so, people continually absorb vital elements from their immediate environment which influence their development within the human system (Katan, ibid).

Culture has been studied by many socio-cultural and anthropological scholars over the years. However, there is no unanimous definition of the concept of culture. Trompenaars (1993: 22) states that "in fifteen years I have seldom encountered two or more groups or individuals with identical suggestions regarding the concept of culture" (quoted in Katan 1991: 16). According to the Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics (Asher 1994: 2001), we have further confirmation that "despite a century of efforts to identify culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature". As a result of this, we understand that the concept of culture is still extremely controversial.

Some anthropologists, sociologists and linguists have attempted definitions of culture, each one representing a different experience and understanding of culture. Different definitions of culture reflect different theoretical bases for understanding the criteria for evaluating human activity. One of the oldest and most quoted definitions of culture was formulated by the English anthropologist Edward Burnett Taylor in 1871. He said that "culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". In 1952 the anthropologists Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1961: 181) compiled a list of 164 definitions for culture. Their 165th lengthy summary contribution is as follows: "culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning elements of future action".

Other translation theorists have also stated their opinion about culture. For instance, Newmark (1991: 73) identifies culture as "the total range of activities and ideas and their material expression in objects and processes peculiar to a group of people, as well as their particular environment". Nida (2001: 13) describes culture in a perhaps simplistic manner as "the reality of beliefs and practices of a society". Gelles and Levine (1995: 80) identify culture as "design for living" and as the "shared understandings that people use to co-ordinate their activities".

Gail Robinson (1988: 7-13) has grouped the various definitions into two basic levels; external and internal as follows:

1) External:	behaviour	= language, gestures, customs/habits
	products	= literature, folklore, art, music, artifacts
2) Internal:	ideas	= beliefs, values, institutions

Finally, in order to set up a universal definition of culture, UNESCO produced a document in 2002 about identifying culture. This document states that "culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society and of social groups, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". Needless to say, despite the different identifications and understandings of culture, "people instinctively know what culture means to them and to which culture they belong" (Katan 1999: 16). In addition, it should be stated that culture is not visible as a product, but is internal, collective and is acquired rather than learned.

4.3 Culture and Language

Many anthropologists, sociologists and linguists have agreed that culture and language are interwoven elements. The word language is usually quoted when defining culture and vice versa. The relationship between culture and language is even regarded as a field of study in its own right. That is to say that neither can the culture be understood without the language, nor the language understood without the culture. Related to this field, we can find many prominent theorists who support this. Bronislaw Malinoski was one of the first anthropologists to realize that language could only be understood with reference to culture: a context of culture. In 1923 he coined the term "context of situation" and noted that a language could only be fully understood and has meaning when these two contexts (situation and culture) were implicitly or explicitly clear to the interlocutors and hearers (Katan 1999: 72).

Bassnett (2002: 22) quotes Sapir and Whorf who state that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the content of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre the structure of natural language". She believes that language is the heart within the body of culture and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life energy. Bassnett

tries to build on this argument by saying that dealing with language and culture is exactly like a surgeon operating on the heart - he cannot neglect the body that surrounds it. This can be seen more clearly if we consider Irving who states (1998: 36) that "language and culture are inextricably interwoven and that the integration of an element into a culture cannot be said to have been achieved unless and until the linguistic expression of that element has been integrated into the language of the culture". Nida (2001: 27) has the same attitude. He argues that "language represents the culture because the words refer to the culture". He (2001: 13) also states that "language and culture are interdependent symbolic systems". He even goes further to say "a language may be regarded as a relatively small part of culture. He adds that words only have meaning in terms of the corresponding culture. From these arguments we not only understand that there is a dynamic relationship between language and culture, but also that culture and language are inextricable.

4.4 Culture and Translation

It has long been taken for granted by many translators that translation deals mainly with language. The cultural perspective, however, has been ignored to some extent, and has only recently been seriously brought into discussion. This can be seen in the definitions of most translators of the early and mid twentieth century.

The first definition of translation is presented by Catford (1965: 20). He states that "translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language". In this definition, the most important thing is equivalent textual material. Yet, it is still vague in terms of the type of equivalence. Culture is not taken into account. Very similar to this definition is that of Savory (1968) who maintains that translation is made possible by an equivalence of thought that lies behind its different verbal expressions. Nida and Taber (1969: 12) explain the process of translating as follows: "translating consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style".

In *Translation: Applications and Research*, Brislin (1976: 1) defines translation as "the general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf." Similar to the above definition is the one proposed by Pinhhuck (1977: 38). He maintains that "translation is a process of finding a TL equivalent for a SL utterance".

It is noticeable that in the definitions appearing in 1960s-70s, some similarities can be found: (1) there is a change of expression from one language to the other, (2) the meaning and message are rendered in the TL, and (3) the translator has an obligation to look for the closest equivalent in the TL. Yet, there is no indication that culture is taken into account except in the definitions of Nida and Taber. Actually Nida and Taber themselves do not comment on this very explicitly. Following their explanation on "*closest natural equivalent*", however, we can infer that the cultural consideration is taken into account. They maintain that the equivalent sought after in every attempt at translation is the one that is so close that the meaning/message can be transferred well.

Unfortunately, the inclusion of a cultural perspective in the definition of translation does not continue. For example, McGuire's (1980: 2) identification of translation is that "translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structure of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TL structure will be seriously distorted". Even Newmark (1981: 7) does not state anything about culture in his identification of translation. He sees translation as "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". Wills defines translation more or less in the same way. He believes that "translation is a transfer process which aims at the transformation of a written SL text into an optimally equivalent TL text, and which requires the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the SL" (Wills in Noss, 1982: 3). Anton Popovic has a similar understanding of translation. He states (1970: 79) that "the aim of translation is to transfer certain intellectual and aesthetic values from one language into another". Understandably, it is

clear from the previous definitions of translation that culture was not considered fairly. In other words, some translators have focussed on translation only from a linguistic point of view.
As a result of the development of translation studies within the last three decades, we find that translators have become more aware and interested in exposing the importance of culture in translation. The concept of cultural translation flourished after recent translation scholars insisted that translation cannot be achieved without taking culture into consideration.

Nida was one of the translators who realized the importance of culture in translation. This is clear in his concept of dynamic equivalence. His celebrated example, taken from the Bible, is the translation of "Lamb of God" into the Eskimo language. Here "lamb" symbolizes innocence, especially in the context of sacrifice. Eskimo culture however does not know "lamb". Thus, the word does not symbolize anything. Instead of "Lamb of God", he prefers "Seal of God" to transfer the message. Here, he considers cultural aspects. By nature, it is understood that it is possible to translate into any language. Since the content addresses all walks of life and culture plays an important role in human life, culture should also be considered.

Casagrande was one of the earliest translators who figured out the importance of culture in translation. Even though he worked in the 1940s-50s, he opposed all the translators who studied translation from a linguistic point of view. Casagrande understood that culture and translation are intrinsically linked. He (1954: 338) states that “one does not translate language, one translates culture”. Ivir is another prominent translator who believes that culture is the main element which must be considered by translators. He (1998: 36) argues that “translation means translating culture, not languages”. Jakobson and Georges Mounin support this belief as well. They argue that “translation is a series of operations of which the starting point and the end product are significations and function within a given culture”.

4.5 The translator as a cultural mediator

The translator can be considered as the basic element in translation, functioning as a dictionary of culture. Cultures do not exist in dictionaries. The real location of culture is in the head of the translator. If the translator is not aware of the culture he is dealing with, the translation will definitely be lacking and will not transfer the whole meaning or be attractive to the reader.

Katan (1999: 10) believes that a successful translation relies, in the first instance, on the translator. He asserts that the translator needs to be well versed in the customs, habits and traditions of the two cultures. He also needs solid background information about the cultures he is working with, particularly the geography and contemporary social and political history. Nida (2001: 1) believes that the translator's lack of awareness of the cultures of the SL and TL breaks three key principles of translation. They are: 1) faithfulness (faithful equivalence in meaning) 2) expressiveness (expressive clarity of form) and 3) elegance (attractive elegance that makes a text a pleasure to read). Nida and Waard (1986: 14) state that "the translator must be a person who can draw aside the curtains of linguistic and cultural differences so that people may see clearly the relevance of the original message" (quoted in Venuti 1995: 21). Bassnett (1991: 22) believes that "the translator has to take the question of interpretation into account". She adds that the translator needs to consider carefully the ideological implications of the translation.

With regard to this, Venuti (1995: 43) quotes some very nice lines of poetry taken from the Earl of Roscommon as a vital guide for translators. The lines are:

Words in one language Elegantly us'd
Will hardly in another be excus'd,
And some that Rome admir'd in Caesar's Time
May neither suit our Genius nor our clime.
The Genuine sense, intelligibly Told,
Shews a translator both Discreet and Bold.

In these few lines of poetry, the author tries to indicate that for the translator, adaptation in translation in terms of culture and time is very necessary.

4.6 Situations where problems arise in translating culture

Culture is thought by many scholars to pose the most difficult problems in translation. This is because each culture has its own specific traditions. In addition, there is a distinction between the denotative meaning of words and phrases and their associated connotations. Translation is, therefore, not simply a matter of seeking other words with similar meaning, but of finding appropriate ways of saying things in another language and culture. The process of transmitting cultural elements through translation is a complicated and vital task due to the fact that culture is a complex collection of experiences. These include history, social structure, religion, traditional customs and everyday practice. This is very difficult for any translator to completely understand. Leppihalme agrees with this argument. He (1997: 21) points out that "culture-bound concepts, even where the two cultures involved are not too distant, can be more problematic for the translator than the semantic or syntactic difficulties of the text". Katharina Reiss states that "two of the most difficult problems of translation in an adequate manner arise: firstly, to bridge the gap between the pragmatic differences as reflected in the systems of the languages concerned and secondly, to bridge the gap between the more specific context which depends on certain historical, social and cultural circumstances" (cited in Toury 1998: 49).

Nida (2003: 168-72) has classified situations where problems occur due to the difference between the cultures of the ST and TT into three main types. These are:

1) There may be an object or event practiced in the source language or culture which is not known in the receptor language, and the equivalent function is not realized by any existing object or event. This type is considered the most complicated one. Catford has addressed the same problem as Nida. He (1965: 99) points out that "cultural untranslatability arises when a situational feature functionally relevant for the ST, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part". Like Catford, Popover (1976) suggests that cultural untranslatability occurs when "a situation where the relation of expressing the meaning, i.e. the relation between the creative subject and its linguistic expression in the original, does not find an adequate linguistic expression in the translation". For example, عطوة *'aṯwah* is a concept used in some Arab countries but not known in others. When someone is killed in a fight, the family of the killer is represented

by some influential characters from other families who go to the bereaved family to ask for عطوة *'atwah*. The concept of عطوة *'atwah* is the sequence of events which starts from the moment the representatives go to the bereaved family. The representatives listen to the requirements of the bereaved family and the procedures to be followed by the killer's family. The bereaved family usually asks for a large sum of money with the associated condition that the killer must leave the city or town forever. The representatives then pay the money in return for a truce. Afterwards they are obliged before the bereaved family to make sure that the killer has left the area. At the end of the process, the bereaved family calls a truce for one year until the problem is solved between the two sides. In a case such as this, where the translator finds it impossible to translate this concept or to find any close equivalent which allows the reader in the target culture to understand, Nida proposes that the translator ought to explain the situation in a footnote.

2) There may be no object or event in the receptor culture which corresponds to some referent in the source text, but the equivalent function is realized by another object or event. Nida gives "wagging their heads" as an example. He says that some people may not understand this as a sign of derision, since for them this function is expressed by spitting.

3) One may find that the receptor culture does possess almost the same object or event as mentioned in the source message, but in the receptor culture it may have an entirely different function. Nida comments that in western European cultures the heart is seen as the centre of emotion and as the focal element in the personality; but in many other languages the heart may have nothing to do with emotion. A good example to illustrate Nida's argument is found in Shakespeare's eighteenth sonnet (1592) "Shall I compare thee". Both Arab countries and England have beautiful natural features, but because of the difference in geographical situation, beautiful features do not function in the same way in the two areas. What is beautiful in England is not necessarily beautiful in other places. Let us consider Shakespeare's sonnet and see the different functions. The sonnet is:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou are more lovely and more temperate
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And Summer's lease all too short a date;

It is well known that summer is very beautiful in temperate countries, and implies great beauty. The image of summer for English people does not function in the same way as it does for Arabs in the Gulf States. According to the English understanding of a summer's day, it is a day when the sun shines brightly and flowers, especially sweet-scented roses, are blossoming everywhere. By contrast, the concept of a summer's day for Arabs in the Gulf States is completely different. It is when dust and sand are scattered everywhere, and everyone is soaked in sweat and his throat is dry. It is a time when plants or flowers are withered and irrigation channels are dry.

In this cultural-bound sonnet, the translator will face a problem, at least for hot countries, if he does not take the surrounding circumstances into account. In this case, the translator does not have any choice but to supply the cultural equivalent in the TL. A change must occur because the meaning will be ridiculous for the reader. Nida and Taber both support this idea. They (1969: 110) argue that alteration can be made if the text is likely to be misunderstood by the receptor, or if the text is likely to have no meaning for the receptor. In this case, the translator can compare Shakespeare's lover with a waterfall or a cool breeze, or with any other beautiful image that the receptors dream of. Usually, Arab poets liken their lovers to a full moon in a clear sky surrounded by bright stars. Clearly, what is beautiful in one place is not necessarily the same in another. Toury (1995: 27) is right here to explain that "every individual text is of course unique, [...] culture always entails some change".

Newmark believes that translating cultural terms is a difficult task due to the cultural gap between the source and target language culture. He (2003: 95) classifies the semantic fields where gaps exist and problems are posed in translating culture into five categories. These are:

1) **Ecology**; flora, fauna, winds, hills, etc. Newmark believes that these terms cause problems in translation because they are different from other cultural terms. They are usually value-free, politically and commercially. Nevertheless, their diffusion depends on the importance of their country of origin as well as their degree of specificity. In such cases, Newmark argues that the best procedure for translating these terms is to transfer them with the addition of a brief culture-free third term where necessary in the text. In cases where ecological features become more or less lexical items in the importing TL such as *pomelo, avocado, guava, mango,* naturalisation is the best procedure.

2) **Material culture** (artefacts)

A) Food: mansaf, ma'l_ubeh, musakhkhan (Arabic). According to Newmark, food is the most sensitive and important expression of national culture; food terms are subject to the widest variety of translation procedures. Newmark recommends equivalence, transference and neutral terms.

B) Clothes: anarka, kanga (African) dhoti (Indian). To translate these terms, Newmark proposes an explanation of these terms for TL general readers if the generic noun or classifier is added: e.g., *shintigin trousers* or *basque skirt* or again, if the particular is of no interest, the generic word can simply replace it.

C) Houses and towns: kampong, Bourg, etc.

D) Transport: bike, rickshaw, roundabout, etc. Newmark argues that these names have become more or less international.

3) **Social culture-work and leisure**: aja, ama, condottier, rock, etc. Newmark points out that, in some cases, translating socio-cultural terms poses few difficulties since the words can be transferred and will have approximate one-to-one translations or can be functionally defined.

4) **Organisations**, customs, activities, procedures, concepts

A) Political and administrative. Newmark states that some political and administrative terms are translated literally, such as *White House, Home Office, Treasur,* while other transparent terms must be transferred such as *Knesset (*Israel), *Bundstage* (Norway), *Doma* (Russia), etc. Usually, these terms became recognized internationally.

B) Religious. Newmark points out that the translation of Christian terms into English for a standard English speaking readers poses no problem because they are reflected in manifold translations, while the language of other world religions tends to be transferred when it becomes of TL interest.

C) Artistic. The translation of artistic terms, according to Newmark, referring to movements, procedures and organisations generally depends on the general knowledge of the readership. Some terms such as *London Orchestra* can be translated, while names of museums and theatres can be transferred. Others like *ballet* can be naturalised if their universality is accepted.

5) **Gestures and habits:** "Cock a snook", "spitting", etc. Newmark states that for gestures and habits there is a distinction between description and function which can be made where necessary in ambiguous cases. Translating these terms poses problems because they occur in some cultures and not in others. For instance, some people smile a little when someone dies, others kiss their finger tips to greet or praise, while in some other cultures people give a thumbs up to signal OK. In cases like these, Newmark recommends equivalence.

Problems of translating cultural elements are posed not only in the above situations, but also in others. For example, according to Armstrong (2005: 17), codability is considered among the culture-specific elements that cause a problem for the translator because knowledge of codes is distributed unequally within, as well as across, a speech community. For example, it is very difficult for a translator to translate a British code such as ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour Order) into Arabic or any other language found outside Britain because this code is a British socio-cultural element. Similarly, it might be difficult for a British translator to translate or identify a code such as PNA (Palestinian National Authority) if he does not have previous knowledge of it.

Lastly, it is important to mention Katan who has quite a different point of view about cultural gaps in translation. He (1999: 7) argues that from the year 2000 and beyond, problems of translating cultural concepts have been reduced to a minimum. Katan believes that the translation of culture is becoming easier due to the development of communication technology. He believes that the technical level of communication is explicit, and ideas are consciously transmitted. He adds that the dictionary gives denotative meanings which need to be translated when cultures have been globalized. However, he adds that it might be necessary to use more text to explain some concepts because the world is categorized in different ways by different cultures.

One might, to some extent, agree with Katan's argument if we refer to the example given by Nida and Taber about translating culture. They (1969: 4) gave the expression "white as snow" as an example where problems of translating cultural elements are posed. They argue that it is hard for some Africans to understand the concept of "snow" because they do not have snow or they have never experienced or seen it. Undoubtedly, due to the fact that TV and satellite have become increasingly popular among these peoples, the concept of snow has become familiar to many of them, and this word can now be translated directly and understood. Similarly, Newmark (2003:

98) considers some kinds of French wines and African food as posing cultural problems in translation. Needless to say, these terms have become much more known widely as a result of the development of communication and world trade. These are some of the many examples that might support Katan's argument. This is not to say the translating cultures has become easy, but it might be argued that, with the advent of globalisation and the world being increasingly reduced to a global village, conceptual terms become easier to translate as different cultures come together under the global communication umbrella. Therefore, the problems encountered are greatly reduced.

4.7 Strategies for translating culture

Some prominent translation theorists have suggested some specific procedures and strategies for tackling the cultural problems posed in translation in order to achieve communicative equivalence. Ivir (1987) for instance suggests seven strategies. Newmark (1988: 75-78) lists twelve procedures, Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 29) identify five solutions for dealing with what they refer to as cultural transposition and Aixela (1996: 54-60) distinguishes eleven procedures. Baker (1992: 21) and Mounin (1976: 52) have suggested some specific procedures too. Ghazala (2002) lists sixteen procedures, while Katan (1999: 148) adopts a rather different approach and proposes the concept of chunking which involves moving between cultural frames, either to a more general level referred to as "chunking up", or to a more specific one referred to as "chunking down" or to an equivalent frame at a similar level referred to as "chunking sideways". In this section, the strategies proposed by Ivir, Newmark and Dickins, Hervey and Higgins will be discussed as they are the most common and practically applied strategies.

4.7.1 Ivir's strategies

Ivir's strategies are often considered the most common and practical procedures for minimizing the cultural gap in translation between the ST and TT. Therefore, this part will discuss these seven strategies in a broader way than the other procedures. The strategies are:

1) **Borrowing** or importation of the source language expression. Borrowing may be defined here as the transfer of source language lexemes or lexeme combinations into the target language, normally without formal or semantic modification (Che Suh 2005: 122). This strategy is used to ensure a very precise transmission of cultural information, provided that the knowledge of the extralinguistic reality in the source culture has been ensured in some other way. This strategy has the advantage that, once the expression enters the target language, it can be used freely in all the contexts and collocations in which it is used in the source language. This strategy must be combined with a definition if the borrowed term is to be given a precise meaning in the target language. This strategy is helpful because it allows the new reader to understand the borrowed cultural concept in the same way as the source reader does. For example, the English cultural concept *pub* has become well known and understood by many other cultures. It must be pointed out that there are certain restrictions on borrowing which prevent it from being applied to all cases involving cultural gaps. In the first place, borrowing makes sense only if the borrowed expression is used frequently so as to familiarise the reader with it. In the second place, the borrowed expression must be easily integrated into the target language phonologically and morphologically. A possible strategy is to borrow terms occasionally, but not too many of them at the same time because this hinders communication.

Bassnett (1991: 22) rejects the idea of borrowing. She states that "to attempt to impose the value system of the SL culture onto the TL culture is dangerous ground". Armstrong has, to some extent, the same thought. He (2005: 143) argues that borrowing is problematic, because the borrowing of a word is permanent if the term proves its worth in the borrowing language, but sometimes the borrowing may prove ephemeral. However, he states that in some cases, borrowing is good because a language sometimes renews its lexicon. Nida (2003: 173) points out that borrowing is not applicable in some languages where people usually attempt to make up

descriptive equivalents based on their own models of words or phrase formation, as is typically the case in Standard Arabic. Newmark (1988: 81) supports this strategy (transference) if the borrowed element is naturalized in the host language. He (ibid: 82) suggests that this strategy is useful when a translator wants to attract the reader or to give a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader.

2) **Definition** is a strategy used to explain the cultural term used in a context that is not known to the target reader in an attempt to make him aware of it. Definition must not be exhaustive. The translator should focus on the information relevant for the act of communication. The main drawback of definitional translation is its unwieldiness, so it is mostly used as a complementary procedure and not on its own. Usually definition is used in combination with borrowing when a new cultural term is mentioned for the first time. Apart from unwieldiness, definitions are typically also communicatively too heavy resulting in over translation. Definition may be placed either in the text body or in footnotes.

According to Nida (2003: 238), definition in the form of footnotes has two principal functions; firstly, to correct linguistic and cultural discrepancy, and secondly, to add information which may be generally useful in understanding the historical and cultural background of the document in question. Nida points out that definition has a danger in that it may hold up the narrative and in some cases burden the reader with irritating detail. So, this proposed solution should not always be considered a laudable one.

3) **Literal Translation** is a strategy often regarded as a procedure for the filling of cultural and lexical gaps in translation and, together with borrowing, is the commonest method of cultural translation and the spread of influence from one culture to another. Literal translation, like any other strategy, has its advantages and limitations which must be considered carefully. The main value of this strategy is its faithfulness to the source language expression and its transparency in the target language. For instance, in translating *The White House* from English into Arabic as البَيْت الأبْيَض *albayt al abyad*, the concept is both correctly translated and easily understood by speakers of the target language. So, the best candidates for literal translation are those cultural terms which, while referring to a potentially shared extra linguistic reality, are due to differences in the lexical mapping of that reality and are linguistically expressed in the source language.

However, the conditions for literal translation are not always favourable. When the extralinguistic realities of the two cultures differ at a particular point, the literal translation of an expression will not be sufficiently transparent to fill the gap, for instance, translating *high school* literally from English into Arabic, the Arab receiver will be far from understanding the intended meaning. The equivalent translation to this term in the Arab world is secondary school. If the translator translates it literally into مَدْرَسَه عُليا *madrasah 'ulya,* the translation will be completely different and it will mislead the hearer. Thus, literal translation is unreliable when it clashes directly with an existing expression in the target language having a meaning different than that intended by the original sender.

4) **Substitution** is a procedure available to the translator in cases when two elements of the two cultures are similar or one overlaps with the other, in other words, when the source cultural element does not find an empty slot but something similar, though not identical, in the target culture. In this case, the translator exploits that similarity and uses the corresponding target-language expression as a full equivalent. As a result, the linguistic expression of the source language element does not cause any confusion since the target language offers a natural expression for its own cultural elements. For example, the Arabic word منبر *minbar* expresses roughly the same concept as the word *pulpit* in English. So, when the word منبر *minbar* is translated as *pulpit,* the English reader will not have any problem in grasping it. It should be pointed out here that substitution is most acceptable when the cultural element in the text is background information and not the focus of the message.

The advantage of the substitution strategy is that it achieves total linguistic and cultural transparency. The receiver has no difficulty understanding such terms and identifying the concepts for which they stand; the concepts themselves are not strange to him and therefore do not hinder communication. The main drawback of the substitution strategy is that it identifies concepts which are not identical, eliminating the strangeness of the foreign culture and treating foreign cultural concepts as indigenous. In addition, no firm criteria exist to specify how similar the elements of the two cultures must be in order for them to substitute each other. On this point, Baker agrees with Ivir. She (1992: 31) points out that the main advantage of this strategy is that the target reader can easily identify the item which has a currency in their language.

5) **Lexical Creation** is possible when the communicative situation rules out a definition or literal translation, when borrowing is sociolinguistically discouraged and substitution is not available for communicative reasons. The advantage that it offers is that the newly created lexical item or combination is culturally 'empty', and these are ready to receive and convey the intended content of the source-cultural element. At the same time, such cultural neutrality has the disadvantage of masking the cultural provenance of the element in question. For example, because Standard Arabic tends to reject borrowing, when the computer was invented, Arab translators created a new Arabic-based term for this notion. The newly created word is حاسوب *hasub*. This word was derived from the root حَسَبَ *hasaba* "to calculate" and as such is very acceptable to Arab native speakers.

6) **Omission** is necessitated not by the nature of the cultural element to be translated but by the nature of the communicative situation in which such an element appears. The translator prefers to use this strategy and not one of the previous strategies when he feels that these strategies might cost him more communicatively than they could contribute to the faithfulness of the translation. For example, Arabs introduce their presidents with certain attributes that would found peculiar to the English receiver if translated. Libyans call Al-Qadhafi "the great leader, the brother, the symbol, the hero Muammar Al-Qadhafi". In this case, when translating such a text into English, the translator might decide to omit these attributes to make it natural to the English receiver by transferring only "the Libyan leader Al-Qadhafi".

On this point, we find that Levy, the great Czech translation scholar opposes omission. He insists that any omission of difficult expressions in translating is immoral. The translator, he believes, has the responsibility of finding a solution to the problems (cited in Bassnett 1991: 22).

7) **Addition** of cultural information in some cases may turn out to be a necessary procedure in the translation of the implicit elements of culture. The original sender addressing an in-group of receivers with whom he shares particular cultural knowledge leaves some things unsaid. The translator addresses an out-group which lacks that knowledge and requires explicit cultural information. For example, the British media calls Blair by his name only because he is well known in Britain. However, when an article in which Blair is mentioned is translated into Arabic, the translator adds some information in order to identify him to the Arab readers who might not

know him. The translator might add words such as "the British Prime Minister Tony [Blair]". Considering these strategies, it might be said that there is no consistent treatment possible for unmatched elements of culture in translation which would be valid for all such elements and for all communicative situations. No blanket decision is possible for a particular text type or an individual text either. In addition, no unique solution exists for a given cultural element that could be utilized by the translator each time that it appears. Instead, the translator chooses from among the possible procedures by considering the nature of the cultural term to be translated and the nature of the communicative process in which it appears. The translator is guided in his choice by a consideration of the status of that cultural element in the source culture and of the status of its linguistic expression in the source and the target language and in the source and the target text.

After Ivir proposed these valuable strategies, he (1977: 37) added the following three observations:

1) Not all the procedures achieve actual transfer in the sense of filling the gap, but they all serve the purpose of achieving communicative equivalence in translation.

2) Combinations of procedures rather than single procedures are sometimes required for optimum transmission of cultural information. Newmark (1988: 84) supports Ivir on this point. He states that in order to avoid possible misunderstanding while transferring, many scholars recommend employing two or more translation strategies at the same time. Similarly, Baker (1992: 34) proposes joining two specific strategies in translation to make sure that the translated text is maximally understood.

3) In planning the translation strategy, the translator does not make a one-time decision on how he will treat unmatched elements of culture, but usually makes a new decision for each such element and for each of its uses in an act of communication.

4.7.2 Newmark's procedures

In a bid to solve, or rather to minimize the cultural dilemma in translation, Newmark (2003: 103) suggests twelve procedures. These procedures are:

1) **Transference:** This occurs when the original SL item is used as a loan in the TL, e.g. *supermarket, hypermarket.* Transference offers local colour and atmosphere, and in specialist texts enables the readership to identify the referent in the other text without difficulty. However, Newmark points out that transference, though it is brief and concise, blocks comprehension, it emphasises the cultural and excludes the message, does not communicate; some would say it is not a translation procedure at all

2) **Cultural equivalence**: swapping the cultural-bound item for an equivalent item in the TL culture, e.g. *Baccalaureat* (French) = *A level* (English) = توجيهي *Tawjihi* (Arabic) = *Bigrut* (Hebrew).

3) **Neutralisation:** This occurs when providing a functional or descriptive equivalent using a more general, culture-free item. E.g. *Baccalaureat = French school leavers' certificate.* .

4) **Literal translation**: This is a self-explanatory expression, but the translation does not necessarily adhere to the ST grammatical structure as in word-for-word or one-to-one translations, e.g. *Treasury* translated as *finance ministry.*

5) **Label**: This is the provisional translation of a new institutional term, usually done through literal translation. It may be left in inverted commas. E.g. *Heritage language = langue d'h eritage.*

6) **Naturalisation:** an extension of transference, this procedure aims to adapt the loan word to sound like a TL word: e.g. *Thatcherism.*

7) **Componential analysis:** splitting up the lexical unit into sense components, the translation will then often comprise several words: e.g. *Debahthification = the destruction of Al-Bahth faction in Iraq.* It is pointed out by Newmark that it is the most accurate translation procedure, since it excludes culture and highlights the message. Componential analysis is based on a component common to the SL and the TL. Newmark asserts that a componential analysis is not as economical and has not the pragmatic impact of the original. So, componential analysis concentrates on the core meaning and how many of the components of the meaning the translator will need to use depends on the importance of the word in the context and the requirement for brevity. Some of its main uses are to expose and fill in gaps in the target language lexis due to cultural distance between the source and target language, and to explain cultural differences between one word with a common main component but a different secondary component in the source and target language.

8) **Deletion:** omitting the unnecessary items if these items do not affect the comprehensibility of the general meaning: E.g. President Bush = Bush. Deletion is most likely to be used as a one-off solution where ST items are not repeated.

9) **Couplet:** a combination of two or more procedures, most frequently in the form of transference followed by an explanation. This can be Label or Naturalisation followed by explanation.

10) **Accepted standard translation**: the accepted official translation, often of an institutional terms: e.g. *House of Common* = مَجلِس العُموم البَرِيطاني *Majlis Al-'umum Al-Baritani.*

11) **Paraphrase, gloss, notes,** etc: this involves providing additional cultural information on the assumption that the reader will not have heard of the word.

12) **Classifier:** when a word is added, often a generic noun, to classify a cultural item: e.g. *Basque skirt.*

When considering Newmark's procedures, one might suggest that translations resulting from the application of the first six procedures may become the accepted standard translations, as in the case of *treasury* when it is translated literally as *finance ministry* or when cultural equivalence is applied to give the equivalent of *baccalaureat* in English as *A level.* Deletion is most likely to be used as a one-off solution where ST items are not repeated. Componential analysis, doublets, paraphrases and classifiers are by their nature temporary solutions to specific problems and none is likely to become the accepted standard solution where the SL concept is referred to frequently or in a context where it comes to the attention of a wider audience. Both these factors create pressure for an equivalent as concise as the SL term. Finally, it is worth noting that Newmark distinguishes two procedures, *neutralization* and *paraphrase.* The distinction between the two procedures occurs on a linguistic level: *neutralization* means paraphrasing at the word level, whereas *paraphrase* signifies rewording of meaning at a higher linguistic level.

4.7.3 Dickins, Hervey and Higgins' techniques

In order to minimize the foreign features in the target text when translating any text, Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 29) discuss four degrees of what they term 'cultural transposition':

Exoticism and Calque-----Cultural borrowing-----Communicative translation-----Cultural transplanting

According to Dickins, Hervey and Higgins "a target text marked by exoticism is one which constantly uses grammatical and cultural features imported from the ST with minimal adaptation, and which thereby constantly signals the exotic source culture and its cultural strangeness". Dickins, Hervey and Higgins explain that a TT like this has an impact on the TT public which the ST could never have had on the SL public, for whom the text has no features of an alien culture. They (ibid: 30) give اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُم *assalamu 'alaykum* as an example. They believe that when this everyday Arabic expression of greeting is translated literally into English as *peace be upon you*, it sounds alien in the TT.

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (ibid: 31) define calque as "an expression which consists of TL words and respects TL syntax, but is unidiomatic in the TL because it is modelled on the structure of an SL expression. This lack of idiomaticity may be purely lexical and relatively innocuous, or it may be more generally grammatical". Dickins, Hervey and Higgins illustrate calque by giving the following example: زاد الطين بلة *zad ittin balleh* "It increased the clay moistness". Dickins, Hervey and Higgins state that this translation is not grammatically correct in the TL.

We can deduce from Dickins, Hervey and Higgins' argument that the best way to translate such expressions is normally to find an equivalent which is natural both grammatically and idiomatically in the TT. For example, السَّلامُ عليكم *assalamu 'alaykum* can be translated as *Hello* in order for it to be natural in English.

Further consideration of these four degrees of cultural transposition will be excluded from our discussion because these degrees correspond to notions discussed earlier by Ivir and Nida. For example, cultural borrowing corresponds to Newmark's transference, cultural transposition corresponds to naturalization and communicative translation corresponds to Newmark's term of cultural equivalence. In addition, exoticism and calque were discussed by Dickins. Therefore, compromise and compensation will be considered here.

Dickins, Hervey and Higgins go on to discuss two notices which are frequently apparent in cultural translation: compromise and compensation. According to Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002: 34), compromise in translation means reconciling oneself to the fact that, while one would like to do full justice to the richness of the ST, one's final TT inevitably suffers from various translation losses. For instance, a translator of prose may without qualms sacrifice the phonic and prosodic properties of the ST in order to make its literal meaning perfectly clear, while a translator of verse may equally happily sacrifice much of the ST's literal meaning in order to achieve certain desired metric and phonic effects. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins point out that compromise should be the result of a deliberate decision taken in the light not only of what latitudes are allowed by the SL and TL respectively, but also of all the factors that can play a determining role in translation: the nature of the ST, its relationship to SL audiences, the purpose of the TT, its supposed audience, and so forth. As a result of the loss in the target language,

compensation becomes necessary in order to fill the gap. Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (ibid: 35) define compensation as a technique for making up for the loss of important ST features through replacing ST effects approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST. They distinguish three different aspects of compensation. They are compensation in kind, compensation in place, compensation by merging and compensation by splitting.

Despite all the attempts to bridge the cultural gap, and despite all the strategies and procedures proposed by prominent translation scholars, translating culture-specific elements is still a problematic issue. Nida (2003: 167), for example, points out that "no translation that attempts to bridge a wide cultural gap can hope to eliminate all traces of the foreign setting." He goes on to say that "it is inevitable that when source and receptor languages represent very different cultures there should be many basic themes and accounts which cannot be realized by the process of translation". Other than the cultural gap between the SL and TL, we have two major problems. Firstly, it is hard to find a translator who has a very good knowledge of the two cultures and who can fit the SL culture into the TL culture and make it clear. Secondly, even if the translator transfers the situation perfectly, the reader of the TT may not understand the text because it is not part of their culture.

4.8 Situations where problems arise in translating cultural elements in the Quran

It has been said earlier in this chapter that culture is thought by many scholars to pose the most difficult problems in translation. Some other translation theorists stress that this problem becomes particularly difficult when dealing with religious terms. Bassnett (1991: 30) and Larson (1984: 180) admit that terms dealing with the religious aspects of a culture are usually the most difficult, both in analysis of the source vocabulary and in finding the best receptor languages equivalents. This is because the TL reader is not conscious of the various aspects of meaning involved. This is very obvious in translations of the Quran in English. Cultural elements pose a central problem in transferring the meaning in a comprehensible way. In most cases, linguistic problems could be manipulated so that the translator can find a proper way to render the meaning of the ST in equivalent linguistic patterns in the TL. Culture, by contrast, remains problematic because it is

interrelated with patterns and experiences that are unknown to the TL reader. This idea is adopted by Bassnett and Lefevere. They (1990: 26) argue that "language is not the problem. Ideology and poetics are, as are cultural elements that are not immediately clear, or seen as completely misplaced in what would be the target culture version of the text to be translated".

The Quran is laden with cultural specific elements that are alien and thus, incomprehensible to non-Arabs or non-Muslims. This is because "The Qur'an was revealed in an Arab context of culture that is entirely alien to a target language (TL) audience outside the Arab peninsula" (Abdul-Raof 2005: 162). Generally, Quranic cultural elements are interwoven with Arabic-specific linguistic patterns. In addition, there are connotational overtones in the cultural and linguistic patterns. This means that Quranic-specific cultural features are highly translation-resistant.

It is worth mentioning that not all the Quranic-specific cultural elements have the same level of translation-resistance. The situations where cultural elements are problematic in translation are miscellaneous. Abdul-Raof (2005: 166-171 in Long 2005) classifies the situations where cultural problems are posed in translating the Quran into English into six categories. They are:

1) **Theological expressions**: Abdul-Raof (2005: 166) claims that two cultures may have what are apparently the same theological expressions or words but which are semantically different. This is because theological expressions have religious and cultural specificities. He adds that in this case there is no translational problem involved in rendering the surface denotative meaning but these words relay different mental images and expectations to the ST and TT readers. Abdul-Raof (ibid) gives the word *Allah* as an example. He affirms that the word الله *Allah* is translated as "God" in English but the two words have different meanings for the ST and TT readers. The English, Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit reflects Christian theological ideas that fail to accommodate the Quranic notion of absolute monotheism. Muslims have a semantically different image of the word God. It designates above all the oneness of God, (monotheism) who has 99 attributes mentioned in the Quran, the Lord with whom no one else can be associated, and the Creator of everything including the Prophets.

2) **Ritual expressions**: Both English (Christianity) and Arabic (Islam) have rituals with similar connotations but different values. Abdul-Raof (ibid) gives the words حَجّ Hajj and 'pilgrimage' as an example. He maintains that these two religious rituals are practiced in the two cultures but are performed differently and have no equivalent value in the two cultures. Hajj (pilgrimage) in Islam is performed at a specific time of the year but in Christianity pilgrimages can normally be performed at any time within the year. In addition, the religious rituals are practiced in different places with different ceremonies. So, in cases like these, there is no translation problem but the words have different values in the different cultures.

3) **Abstract moral concepts**: Abdul-Raof (ibid: 167) states that abstract moral concepts create a dilemma in translation. Because these concepts are faith-specific and therefore culture-bound their semantic associations and componential features vary from one faith to another. Abdul-Raof (ibid) provides the word تقوى *taqwa* (piety, righteousness) as an example. He contends that the Quranic concept of *taqwa* uncovers the enormous difficulty in translating the Quran. He notes that there seems to be no unanimous agreement amongst the various Quranic translators as how to render this abstract notion or its derivative plural form المُتَّقون *almuttaqun* (pious, righteous people). For example, Pickthall (1969: 24) translates it as "those who ward off evil", while Asad's (1980: 3) translation is "God-conscious", and Ali (1983) translates it as "those who fear God". Al-Hilali and Khan (1983: 3) transliterate the word *taqwa* then follow it up by a within-the text note detailing the exegesis of this notion. Similarly, the Latin word *dikaios* caused problems for Bible translators. They rendered it as 'righteousness' but this word does not relay the same notion.

4) **Delexicalised expressions**: Abdul-Raof (ibid: 168) states that delexicalised expressions are SL black holes that refer to lexical items that are lacking in the TL, in other words lexical voids. Such expressions are usually found in the Quran translations either transliterated, domesticated, periphrastically translated or transliterated and followed up by an exegetical within-the-text note, or else transliterated and given a detailed exegetical footnote. Abdul-Raof (ibid) gives an example with the word عُمْرة *'umrah*.

"and complete the Hajj or 'umra in the service of God".

Ali (2: 196)

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ

This word, which occurs in the Quran twice, refers to a minor pilgrimage to Mecca at any time of the year and which does not count towards the fulfilment of the religious duty of *Hajj*. In other words, it is voluntary. This concept represents an example of cultural untranslatability as it is absent from the lexicon and the culture of the TL. Examples such as تيمم *tayammum,* عقيقة *'aqiqah,* and عِدّة *'iddah* might be good examples where cultural untranslatability occurs. *Tayammum* means to touch your palms with pure dust and pass them on your face and hands. This is an altenative to ablution in case a Muslim can't find water to perform his ablution. *'aqiqah* refers to a party for relatives and friends that is held by the parents of a newly born baby shortly after the baby's birth, and in which a lamb is slaughtered and served with rice (Abdul-Raof, ibid: 169). *'iddah* refers to a period of time after a couple get divorced. This period (almost three months) is given to the divorced couples to rethink their situation and to encourage them to get together again. During this period, they are still legally married. These words cause a real problem in translating the Quran because the notions are unfamiliar in the target language. Even if these concepts are paraphrased, they tend to remain obscure.

5) **Material culture**: articles of clothing provide examples of material features that differ from one culture to another and may lead to translation difficulties (Catford 1965: 100). Abdul-Raof gives the Quranic word خُمُر *khumur* (head-coverings) in the following verse as an example of the limits of cultural translatability in the Quranic discourse.

"Let them (the believing women) draw their head-coverings over their bosoms".

Asad (24: 31)

وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ

The word *khumur,* whose singular is *khimar* refers to a head-covering that Muslim women are instructed to wear in such a way that it should cover their bosoms. Abdul-Raof argues that Pickthall (1969), Ali (1983) and Al-Hilali and Khan (1983) opt for *veil* as a means of domestication, but the TL word neither provides comprehensive details nor does it give the TL reader a mental image similar to that conjured up by the SL word. The veil in Muslim culture is

meant to hide the woman's hair as well as provide decent covering.

6) **Linguistic void**: Quranic discourse provides numerous examples of linguistic untranslatability because of the different linguistic mechanisms of the SL and TL. In other words, the SL linguistic requirements cannot be accommodated by the TL linguistic norms. Therefore, as Abdul-Raof (ibid: 170) believes, the intentionality of the SL message is not relayed to the TL reader. He argues that the Quran comprises many linguistic patterns that have a cultural bearing on the understanding of the TL message. Abdul-Raof (ibid) gives the following example:

"Behold, they entered his [Abraham] presence, and said: 'Peace!' He said: 'Peace!' [and thought] 'These seem unusual people.'

Ali (51: 25)

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ

Abdul-Raof (ibid) states that this verse has two nouns سَلَامًا *salaman* (peace), which is in the accusative case, and سَلَامٌ *salamun* (peace) which is in the nominative case. It is part of Arab culture to greet people with the expression "peace be upon you". The other person's reply is "and peace be upon you, too". When rendering the word 'peace' into the TL, it will be alien and suggest cultural foreignness owing to literal translation. Abdul-Raof suggests that Dickins, Hervey and Higgins' (2002: 29) cultural transposition (domestication) approach should be adopted in cases like these. According to Dickins et al, a good translation for the word "peace" is "hello". Although Abdul-Raof adopts Dickins' et al. transposition approach, he thinks that this proposed solution does not respect the status of the Quranic text and violates the register of the SL. He adds that the failure of the translation does not lie in the cultural aspect in itself, the most important aspect of the message lies in the grammatical nominative case on the second noun *salamun* "peace" which cannot be accommodated by the TL expression "peace". This is because the second noun "peace" is more courteous than the first one. So, the two SL expressions are different and reflect cultural overtones pertinent to Islamic culture.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that culture and language are interwoven. Translation cannot be achieved without taking culture into consideration. Neither can culture be understood without language, nor language understood without knowing the culture. A successful rendering of culture in translation relies, in the first instance, on the translator. The translator functions as a dictionary of culture since cultures themselves cannot be found in dictionaries. The real location of culture is in the head of the translator. If the translator is not aware of the culture he is dealing with, the translation will definitely be lacking and will not transfer the whole meaning or be attractive to the reader. In other words, it will not be faithful, expressive, or elegant.

This chapter classified situations where problems occur due to the difference between the cultures of the ST and TT into three main types. These are: 1) an object or event in the source language or culture which is not known in the receptor language, and where the equivalent function is not realized by any existing object or event, 2) no object or event in the receptor culture which corresponds to a referent in the source text, but the equivalent function is realized by another object or event, 3) the receptor culture possesses almost the same object or event as mentioned in the source message, but in the receptor culture it may have an entirely different function. The most prominent translation theorists who have suggested some specific procedures and strategies for tackling the cultural problems posed in translation in order to achieve communicative equivalence were considered in this chapter. These are: Ivir (1987), Newmark (1988), and Dickins, Hervey and Higgins (2002).

Finally, this chapter showed that terms referring to the religious aspects of a culture are sometimes the most difficult to deal with, both in terms of analysis of the source language vocabulary and in terms of finding the best receptor language equivalents. This is because the TL reader is not conscious of the various aspects of meaning involved. It then classified the situations where cultural problems are posed in translating the meaning of the Quran into English into six categories. These are: theological expressions, ritual expressions, abstract moral concepts, delexicalised expressions, material culture, and linguistic voids. Strategies for tackling these problems will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Encarta World English Dictionary (2004) identifies research as "methodical investigation into a subject in order to discover facts, to establish or revise a theory, or to develop a plan of action based on the facts discovered". Similarly, research has been described by Mertens (2005: 2) as "a systematic investigation or inquiry whereby data are collected, analysed and interpreted in some way in an effort to understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts". "Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collections, analysis, and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and for enabling man [sic] to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes, and to resolve his conflicts" (Mouly 1978, quoted in Cohen 2003: 45)

The notion of methodical and systematic investigation, it implies that the planning for a piece of academic research is not an arbitrary matter; the research is expected to be conducted rigorously, precisely, and in an ethically defensible manner. This necessitates careful planning. This means that conducting any type of research should be governed by a well-defined research methodology based on scientific principles. Such methodologies are considered to be systems of explicit rules and procedures, upon which research is based, and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996). So, conducting a successful piece of research requires a well-planned methodology.

According to the Macquarie Dictionary (2004: 718) methodology is the science of methods, especially: **a.** a branch of logic dealing with the logical principles underlying the organisation of the various special sciences, and the conduct of scientific inquiry. **b.** Education: a branch of pedagogics concerned with the analysis and evaluation of subject matter and methods of teaching. Somekh and Lewin (2005: 346) define methodology as both "the collection of methods

or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken and the principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research", while Walter (2006: 35) argues that methodology is "the frame of reference for the research which is influenced by the paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is placed or developed". The most common definitions suggest that methodology is the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework while the method refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data

According to Kaplan (1973), the aim of methodology is to describe and analyze the research methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontiers of knowledge. It is to venture generalizations from the success of particular techniques, suggesting new applications, and to unfold the specific bearing of logical and metaphysical principles on concrete problems, suggesting new formulations (quoted in Cohen 2003: 45). In summary, Kaplan suggests that the aim of methodology is to help us understand, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. This implies that no scientific research can exist without a methodology and the methodology has to be carefully selected. If the aim of methodology is to organize the process of methods, then the aim of methods is to produce a piece of research. Cohen et al. (2003: 44) explain that methods are "range of approaches [...] to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction, forming concepts and hypothesis, building models and theories".

According to Creswell (1994: 1), the design of a study begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm. He ascertains that "paradigms in the human and social sciences help us understand phenomena. They advance assumptions about the social world, how science should be conducted, and what constitutes legitimate problems, solutions, and criteria of proof. As such, paradigms encompass both theories and methods. Although they evolve, differ by discipline field, and are often contested". The term "paradigm" is defined by Bogdan & Biklen (1998: 22) as "a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research or the philosophical intent or motivation for undertaking a study. Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2001: 32) provide a definition of paradigm, which includes three elements: a belief about the nature of knowledge, a methodology and criteria for validity.

5.2 Research Paradigms

During the past century, different paradigms have devoloped due to the remarkable growth in social science research. There are two main paradigms for the verification of theoretical propositions, positivism and anti-positivism (or naturalistic inquiry).

5.2.1 Positivism

The positivist paradigm of exploring social reality is "based on the philosophy that originated with Aristotle, Francis Bacon, John Locke, August Comte, and Emmanuel Kant" (Mertens 2005: 8), who emphasized observation and reason as means of understanding human behaviour. According to Mertens, true knowledge is based on experience of senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment. Positivistic thinkers adopt this scientific method as a means of knowledge generation. Hence, it has to be understood within the framework of the principles and assumptions of science. These assumptions, as Cohen et al. (2000) noted, are determinism, empiricism, parsimony, and generality. Determinism means that events are caused by other circumstances; and hence, understanding such casual links is necessary for prediction and control. Empiricism means collection of verifiable empirical evidences in support of theories or hypotheses. Parsimony refers to the explanation of the phenomena in the most economic way possible. Generality is the process of generalizing the observation of the particular phenomenon to the world at large. With these assumptions of science, the ultimate goal of science is to integrate and systematise findings into a meaningful pattern or theory which is regarded as tentative and not the ultimate truth. Theory is subject to revision or modification as new evidence is found. The positivistic paradigm thus systematizes the knowledge generation process with the help of quantification, which is essential to enhance precision in the description of parameters and the discernment of the relationship among them.

Cohen et al. (2000) note that positivism has been criticized due to its lack of regard for the subjective states of individuals. It regards human behaviour as passive, controlled and determined by the external environment. Hence human beings are dehumanized without their intention, individualism and freedom taken into account in viewing and interpreting social reality. According to the critics of this paradigm, objectivity needs to be replaced by subjectivity in the

process of scientific inquiry. This gave rise to anti-positivism or naturalistic inquiry.

5.2.2 Anti-positivism

The anti-positivist paradigm grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey's and other German philosophers' study of interpretive understanding called hermeneutics (Mertens 2005: 12). Anti-positivism emphasizes that social reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual themself according to the ideological positions they possesses. Therefore, knowledge is personally experienced rather than acquired from or imposed from outside. Cohen et al. (2000) contend that the anti-positivists believe that reality is multi-layered and complex and a single phenomenon has multiple interpretations. They emphasize that the verification of a phenomenon is achieved when the level of understanding of that phenomenon is such that the concern is to probe into the various unexplored dimensions of it rather than establishing specific relationship among the components, as happens in the case of positivism.

Cohen et al. (ibid) state that anti-positivism is marked by three schools of thought in social science research. These are phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism. All the three schools of thought emphasise human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives, and suggest a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to social inquiry.

Phenomenology is a theoretical view point which believes that individual behaviour is determined by the experience gained out of one's direct interaction with phenomena. It rules out any kind of objective external reality. Husserl and Schutz are the main proponents of this school of thought. Through interaction with various phenomena, human beings interpret them and attach meanings to different actions and or ideas and thereby construct new experiences. Therefore, the researcher has to develop an empathic understanding to know the process of interpretation by individuals so that they can reproduce in their mind the feelings, motives and thoughts that are behind the action of others.

Ethnomethodology, an approach of phenomenological sociology, was developed by Harold Garfinkel and his fellow ethnomethodologists. It deals with the world of everyday life. According to enthomethodologists, theoretical concerns centre around the process by which common sense

reality is constructed in everyday face-to-face interaction. This approach studies the process by which people invoke certain 'taken-for-granted' rules about behaviour which they interpret in an interactive situation and make meaningful. They are mainly interested in the interpretations people use to make sense of social settings.

The school of thought of 'symbolic interactionism' was pioneered by Dewey, Cooley and Mead among others. It basically emphasizes the understanding and interpretation of interactions that take place between human beings. The peculiarity of this approach is that human beings interpret and define each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Human interaction in the social world is mediated by the use of symbols like language, which help human beings to give meaning to objects. Symbolic interactionists, therefore, claim that only by concentrating attention on individuals' capacity to create symbolically meaningful objects in the world, can human interaction and resulting patterns of social organizations be understood. As a result, not only do human beings change themselves through interaction, but they also bring about change in societies.

The two paradigms presented above are concerned with two different concepts of social reality. While positivism stands for objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability and constructs laws and rules of human behaviour, non-positivism essentially emphasizes understanding and interpretation of phenomena and making meaning out of this process. Each of the paradigms discussed above has definite research methods which can be used in carrying out scientific investigation. Positivism, which emphasizes the objectivist approach to studying social phenomena, gives importance to research methods focusing on quantitative analysis. Anti-positivism, which stresses a subjectivist approach to studying social phenomena, attaches importance to a range of research techniques focusing on qualitative analysis. This chapter will discuss quantitative and qualitative approaches briefly.

5.3 Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research

Punch (1999: 4) identifies quantitative and qualitative methods simply by saying that "quantitative research is empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers". In other words, qualitative data are information about the world in numerical form, whereas qualitative data are essentially information about the world in the form of words. Punch (ibid: 61) explains that quantitative data are necessarily structured in terms of the number system, and reflect research-imposed constructs. Qualitative data may range from structured to unstructured, and may or may not involve researcher-imposed constructs. Strauss and Corbin define quantitative and qualitative research more clearly. They (1990: 17) state that qualitative research means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Where quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations. Qualitative analysis results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative inquiry. Cohen et al. (2000) add to this that qualitative research typically entails in-depth analysis of relatively few subjects for which a rich set of data is collected and organized. Quantitative research entails the proper application of statistics to typically a large number of subjects. When properly applied, quantitative research is arguably much more statistically powerful. So, quantitative methods help to make generalizations to larger groups and follow a well-established and respected set of statistical procedures, of which the properties are well-understood.

Qualitative research is particularly useful when the researcher is as yet unclear about what specific data should be discerned. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 524) claim that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. They can also be used to gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively. Thus, qualitative methods are appropriate in situations where one needs to first identify the variables that might later be tested quantitatively, or where the researcher has determined that quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation. Research problems tend to be framed as open-ended questions that will support discovery of new information.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches have different methods of data collection. While quantitative approach uses the methods of questionnaire, interview, and observation, qualitative approach uses the methods of in-depth interviews, experiment, and collecting and analysis of documents (case study), (Sekaran 2003: 223).

The aforementioned thoughts presume that quantitative and qualitative approaches rely on quite different assumptions and have different features. Cook & Reichadt (1979: 10) enumerate the classic distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches. They present these distinctions in the following table.

Qualitative Approach	**Quantitative Approach**
• Phenomenological	• Positivistic
• Inductive	• Hypothetic/ deductive
• Holistic	• Particularistic
• Ungeneralizable; single case study	• Generalizable; multiple case studies
• Subjective/ insider centred	• Objective/ outsider centred
• Process oriented	• Outcome oriented
• Anthropological worldview	• Natural science worldview
• Relative lack of control	• Attempt to control variables
• Goal: understand actor's view	• Goal: find facts & causes
• Discovery oriented	• Verification oriented
• Explanatory	• Confirmatory
• Valid; real, rich and deep data	• Reliable; hard and replicable
• Dynamic reality assumed; "slice of life"	• Static (stable) reality assumed; relative constancy in life

Cook & Reichadt (1979: 10)

Considerable disagreements exist over the appropriateness of various methods and methodological stances for conducting research. One debate of growing intensity centres on the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods. Each of these methods has a separate group of advocates who argue that this approach is the best suited for evaluating. For example,

Campbell and Stanley (1966: 2) favour quantitative methods. They describe quantitative experiments, as "the only way of establishing a cumulative tradition in which improvement can be interior novelties". McGeehan (1998) also favours this approach. He contends that "a more accurate and productive way of considering research would be as more quantitative than qualitative". Selvin (1973: xii) also favours quantitative research: "because quantitative data can be analyzed statistically, it is possible to examine complicated theoretical problems, such as the relative importance of many causes of delinquency, far more powerfully than with the verbal analysis of qualitative data". Similarly, Bryman (1996: 38) advocates a quantitative approach and criticizes the qualitative approach for the difficulty of replicating its findings. He (ibid) adds that qualitative approach has intuitive components and is seen as a product of the idiosyncrasies of the researcher. It is therefore seen as difficult to replicate and hence untrustworthy.

In contrast, Cronbach (1975: 124) claims that statistical research is not able to take full account of the many interaction effects that take place in social settings. He gives examples of several empirical "laws" that do not hold true in actual settings to illustrate this point. Cronbach (ibid) adds that "the time has come to exorcise the null hypothesis, because it ignores effects that may be important, but that are not statistically significant. So, Cronbach does not favour the quantitative approach. He confirms that qualitative inquiry accepts the complex and dynamic quality of the social world. Therefore, it is the best approach to adopt Weiss and Rein (1972: 243), and Guba (1978: 81) also favour qualitative methods.

It appears that quantitative methods have been developed most directly for the task of verifying or confirming theories and that, to a large extent, qualitative methods were developed for the task of discovering or generating theories, (Cook & Reichardt 1979: 17).

According to the previously discussed views of the appropriateness of each approach, it appears that each approach has some strong and some weak features. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 19-20) have considered this matter and have analysed the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, as follows.

5.3.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Research

Strengths

1) Testing and validating already constructed theories about how (and to a lesser degree, why) phenomena occur.
2) Testing hypotheses that are constructed before the data are collected. Can generalize research findings when the data are based on random samples of sufficient size.
3) Can generalize a research finding when it has been replicated on many different populations and subpopulations.
4) Useful for obtaining data that allow quantitative predictions to be made.
5) The researcher may construct a situation that eliminates the confounding influence of many variables, allowing one to more credibly assess *cause-and-effect* relationships.
6) Data collection using some quantitative methods is relatively quick.
7) Provides precise, quantitative, numerical data.
8) Data analysis is relatively less time-consuming (using statistical software).
9) The research results are relatively independent of the researcher (e.g. effect size, statistical significance).
10) It may have higher credibility with many people in power (e.g. administrators, politicians, people who fund programmes).
11) It is useful for studying large numbers of people.

Weaknesses

1) The researcher's categories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings.
2) The researcher's theories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings.
3) The researcher may miss out on phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than on theory or hypothesis generation (called the confirmation bias).
4) Knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals.

5.3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

Strengths

1) The data are based on the participants' own categories of meaning.

2) It is useful for studying a limited number of cases in depth.

3) It is useful for describing complex phenomena.

4) Provides individual case information.

5) Can conduct cross-case comparisons and analysis.

6) Provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena (i.e. the "emic" or insider's viewpoint).

7) Can describe, in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts.

8) The researcher identifies contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest.

9) The researcher can study dynamic processes (i.e. documenting sequential patterns and change).

10) The researcher can use the primarily qualitative method of "grounded theory" to generate inductively a tentative but explanatory theory about a phenomenon.

11) Can determine how participants interpret "constructs" (e.g. self-esteem, IQ).

12) Data are usually collected in naturalistic settings in qualitative research.

13) Qualitative approaches are responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholders' needs.

14) Qualitative researchers are responsive to changes that occur during the conduct of a study (especially during extended fieldwork) and may shift the focus of their studies as a result.

15) Qualitative data in the words and categories of participants lend themselves to exploring how and why phenomena occur.

16) One can use an important case to demonstrate vividly a phenomenon to the readers of a report.

17) Determine idiographic causation (i.e. determination of causes of a particular event).

Weaknesses

1) Knowledge produced may not generalize to other people or other settings (i.e. findings may be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study).

2) It is difficult to make quantitative predictions.

3) It is more difficult to test hypotheses and theories.

4) It may have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programs.
5) It generally takes more time to collect the data when compared to quantitative research.
6) Data analysis is often time consuming.
7) The results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies.

Although some social science researchers perceive qualitative and quantitative approaches as incompatible, and consider it neither possible nor sensible to mix different approaches within a single study or project (Green & Caracelli 1997: 8), others have recently come to abandon the choice between qualitative and quantitative data. They are concerned rather with that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each. They believe that qualitative and quantitative research can be effectively combined in the same research project (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Patton, 1990). This belief has generated a new approach which is the mixed-methods approach. Creswell (2003: 20) identifies the mixed-methods approach to research as one that involves gathering both numeric information and text information, so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. According to Gorard (2004: 7), research is strengthened by the use of mixed-methods because this can lead to less waste of potentially useful information, and often has greater impact, because figures can be very persuasive whereas stories are more easily remembered and repeated for illustrative purposes. Patton, (1990) also believes that the mixed-methods approach results in better findings.

Cook & Reichardt (1979: 11) oppose the idea of combining quantitative and qualitative methods. They maintain that "the qualitative and quantitative paradigms are assumed to be rigid and fixed, and the choice between them is assumed to be the only choice available. That is, the paradigms are considered to be cast in stone so that modification; or other options are not possible." So, according to them, qualitative and quantitative methods themselves can never be used together because "each method has different attributes and each sees the world in different ways. Johnson & Onwuegbzie (2004: 21) note some drawbacks of the mixed-methods approach that make the choice of this approach not the best. These disadvantages are:

1) More expensive
2) More time consuming
3) Can be difficult for a single researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative approach

4) Researcher has to learn about multiple methods and approaches and to understand how to mix them.

5) It is difficult to analyse qualitative data quantitatively and visa versa

5.4 Research approach and Methodology

This chapter has discussed the nature and aims of both research paradigms and research approaches. It has also shown the weaknesses and strengths of each research approach. It is now up to the researcher to adopt the most suitable approach and corresponding methodology for carrying out this research. There are several considerations when deciding to adopt a research methodology: first, the nature or essence of the phenomena being investigated; second, whether the phenomena are objective in nature or created by the human mind (subjective); third, which are the best methods to collect data? Based on these elements, the researcher can identify whether the research questions pertain to positivism or anti-positivism, and choose the appropriate methodology accordingly. So, the purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research.

This research investigates a hypothesis that the meanings of some verses of the Quran translated into English are incomprehensible to native speakers of English who do not have good previous knowledge of this Book. This hypothesis has been developed by the researcher himself and is supported by the experience of well-educated native speakers of English. This means that the hypothesis is objective. As the hypothesis is based on reality independent of the researcher, this phenomenon is positivist in nature. Therefore, an essentially quantitative approach was adopted.

5.5 Research methods

5.5.1 Data collection

It was mentioned above that there are three main quantitative data collection methods; questionnaire, interview, and observation, each with its own advantages and disadvantages, and each used for specific forms of enquiry. The use of appropriate methods greatly enhances the

value of the research. Since this research tests English native speakers' comprehension of the translations of the meaning of the Quran in English, then there are two obvious possible methods available to test their comprehension; either questionnaire or interview or a combination of the two. After these three possibilities were considered, a questionnaire was adopted as the main means of collecting reliable and valid data in order to attest the research hypothesis. Interviews were used as a supportive means to obtain further explanatory information about some of the responses to the questionnaire. Before discussing the questionnaire, the research population and sample will be introduced.

5.5.2 Research population

Dornyei (2003: 70) identifies a research population as "the group of people whom the survey is about." Since this study probes the comprehensibility of the meaning of the Quran in English, native speakers of English were the population of the study. The population of the questionnaire were non-Muslims who did not know Arabic and did not have a good knowledge of the Quran. They had at least a bachelor degree, whether they were academics or not. In other words, the research studied both average and well-educated backgrounds regardless of their age. This is because the language used in some translations of the meaning of the Quran is very formal and includes archaic expressions. Therefore, this kind of language will not be understood unless the reader is from an average or well-educated background. Moreover, this kind of people were believed to be more responsible than others, and more likely to be interested in the scholarly objectives of this questionnaire which means that they are likely to read and answer the questionnaire more seriously. This increases the possibility of obtaining more reliable findings.

5.5.3 Research sample

Great care was taken in the selection of the sample to ensure that it represents the population. The population sample was selected from both academics and non-academics. Academic respondents were chosen from three universities; The University of Salford, The University of Manchester: and University College London. The majority of the academic sample were lecturers and fellow PhD and MA students at the University of Salford. Those who are not academics were chosen from the middle classes mainly from Greater Manchester with a few from the London area.

Doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers, and others were among the non-academic sample. Respondents were of both genders and had no any previous knowledge of Arabic or the Quran. Consequently, the chosen sample was very similar to the target population in its most important general characteristics such as native language, educational background, religion, age, gender, etc. The sample was deliberately selected from different geographical locations and from dissimilar types of jobs in order to obtain more inclusive, valid and reliable results.

The type of sample chosen in this research was a convenience (opportunity) sample. This type is favoured by many research scholars. For example, Dornyei (2003: 72) stresses that "the most common sample type research is a convenience (opportunity) sample, where an important criterion of sample selection is the convenience for the researcher." Members of the sample were selected from those who met certain practical criteria that match the purpose of the study as well as the convenience of both the researcher and the respondents, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, and easy accessibility.

5.5.4 Pilot Study

"A pilot study is the process of carrying out a preliminary study, going through the entire research procedure with a small sample through a questionnaire or interview schedule done in preparation for the major study" (Polit et al. 2001: 467). "The pilot study serves as a trial run that allows us to develop and test adequacy of research instruments, assess whether the research protocol is realistic and workable, establish whether the sampling frame and technique are effective, identify potential logistical problems which might occur using proposed methods, and to collect preliminary data" (De Vaus 1993).

In order to test the hypothesis proposed and ensure that this topic is worthwhile studying, to test the reliability of the questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data and to revise the research methodology before starting the main study, a pilot study test was undertaken on a small group of volunteers, who were similar to the target population. Nine questionnaires were handed out and five were sent back. Three of the volunteers were academics who had an MA and were teaching at the University of Salford, and two were PhD students at the same university. They were all non-Muslim native speakers of English. The pilot study questionnaire contained ten examples.

Each example involved a complete and independent idea and was followed by four questions to test the comprehensibility of the extract and to find out the possible reasons for incomprehensibility in case the extract was unintelligible. The extracts used in this questionnaire were excluded from the main questionnaire.

The results of the pilot study revealed that the extracts selected from the three translations of the meaning of the Quran in question were problematic. The ten extracts contained in the questionnaire were unintelligible to the participants. This supported the hypothesis of this research, and consequently inspired the researcher to carry out the main study. Results of the pilot study will be discussed in detail in chapter six.

The pilot study showed that the data needed to carry out this research can be successfully obtained by means of a questionnaire and can be analyzed to produce valuable and valid information. It also served to improve the internal reliability and validity of the questionnaire of the main study and assess the best method of its distribution and collection. In addition, it recorded the time taken to complete the questionnaire, which helped in designing the main questionnaire in such a way that it could be filled out in a reasonable time.

5.5.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two key concepts in measurement theory, referring to the properties of the measurement techniques and the data obtained by them. "Reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instrument and over groups of respondents. It is concerned with precision and accuracy. For research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found" (Cohen et al. 2000: 117). Validity refers to the quality of various conclusions one might reach based on a research project (the principles that we use to judge the quality of research). It is "a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure" (ibid: 105).

In order to improve reliability and validity, great care was taken both to make certain that the questionnaire was designed to collect the specific data needed to achieve the aims of the study

and that all the elements needing to be investigated were covered. The samples themselves were inclusive and a fair representation of the three translations was considered. They were addressed in depth and breadth. The questions were carefully design to be interesting and explicit. The questionnaire was highly structured and the questions were clearly formulated. Both careful sampling and appropriate instrumentation improved the questionnaire reliability and guaranteed accurate responses. It is worth mentioning that "It is not possible to calculate reliability exactly, we have to estimate reliability" (McKiernan 1998).

The questionnaire questions were fully and legibly answered. The results showed that translations of the meaning of the Quran into English are problematic. The respondents strove to understand the samples. The same results were obtained from the pilot test and from my own personal experiences. First, when doing my MA in translation, as a result of heated discussions about Islam, my English fellow students were asked to read some parts of some translations of the Quran in English which establish the right view of Islam. After having read these parts, they stressed that the translation "did not make any sense". Second, an English lecturer, who was teaching English to Arab students at the University of Salford, wanted to have some information about Islam. She asked me to give her a version of the Quran in English and I did. Two weeks after she got the translation, she claimed that it was very hard to follow the context and the meaning was inexplicit. Another experience I had was when I gave three different translations to three well educated English people to help me by reading them and selecting some examples where comprehensibility was very hard in order to use them as samples in the main questionnaire. Like the English lecturer, they maintained that the text was tedious and in most cases it did not give an obvious sense. My fellow students and those who helped me to choose the extracts used in the main questionnaire were very similar to the respondents of both the pilot study and the questionnaire.

The translations studied were unintelligible to different samples in different situations. This shows that the data given by the questionnaire is valid and can be generalized to a wider population. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire were analyzed statistically using SPSS software. This means that the results are accurate. Once again, it is worth mentioning that "It is impossible for research to be 100 per cent valid; that is the optimism of perfection" (Cohen et al. 2000: 105).

5.5.6 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was favoured because it is one of the most popular and active research instrument applied in social sciences. Dornyei (2003: 6) stresses that "the popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are easy to construct, extremely versatile, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly and in a form that is readily processable". Dornyei (ibid) then claims that the main strength of questionnaires is the ease of their construction. In an age of computers and sophisticated word processing software it is possible to draw up something that looks respectable in a short period of time. Sekaran (2003: 236) also claims that "a good way to collect data is personally administered questionnaires". He adds that questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2000: 245) believe that the questionnaire is an effective means of research. They maintain that "the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information,... and comparatively straightforward to analyze".

While the questionnaire has advantages it also has disadvantages. These are: 1) Simplicity of answers yielded, 2) There is a halo effect, 3) Acquiescence and prestige biases, 4) Respondent literacy, 5) Self-deception and the effect of fatigue in cases where the questionnaire is long, and 6) Low rate of response (Dornyei, 2001: 9), Sekaran (2003: 239), Bryman (2001: 129). Despite these drawbacks, questionnaires are still considered a very good means of collecting data.

Brown (2001: 6) defines a questionnaire as "any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers". Similarly, Sekaran (2003: 236) defines it as "a preformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives."

There are two types of questionnaires, self-administered and group-administered. Each of these two types has two forms. They are closed-ended questions where the respondent is provided with ready-made response options to choose from, and open-ended questions where the respondent is given a space to write about a specific topic (Dornyei 2003: 35). The major advantage of closed-

ended questions is that their coding and tabulation is straightforward and leaves no room for rate subjectivity, while, open-ended questions can provide a far greater richness of information. Open responses can offer graphic examples, illustrate quotes, and can also lead to identify issues not previously anticipated (Dornyei 2003: 47).

A Group-administered questionnaire is when a sample of respondents is brought together and asked to respond to structured sequences of questions. The advantages of this type are: a) if a respondent was unclear about the meaning of a question, they could ask for clarification, b) the researcher can collect all the completed responses within a short period of time, c) the rate of response is high, and d) the cost is low. Despite the group-administered questionnaire having significant advantages, it is very difficult to conduct. This is because it is extremely difficult to gather a specific sample in a limited time and a specific place. The convenience of each respondent differs from that of the others. Therefore, this type of questionnaire is not prefered by researchers. For this reason, the group-administered questionnaire was not used in this research.

Self-administered questionnaire, or one-to-one questionnaire, refers to a situation when someone delivers the questionnaire by hand to the designated person and arranges the completed form to be collected later. This method has the advantage that the personal contact allows the questionnaire administrator to create a rapport with the respondent, to explain the purpose of the inquiry, and to encourage cooperation. This makes the chances of the questionnaires being returned are significantly better (Dornyei 2003: 81).

Cohen et al. (2000: 128) prefer the self-administered questionnaire method in research to other means because it has advantages over them. They aver that the self-administered questionnaire tends to be more reliable; because it is anonymous, it encourages greater honesty, it is more economical than other methods in terms of time and money; and there is the possibility that it may be mailed. Likewise, Oppenheim asserts that the self-administered questionnaire is an accurate means of data collection. He (1979: 36) points out that "this method of data collection ensures a high response rate, accurate sampling, and a minimum of interviewer bias". Because of these positive attributes, and given the demands of the research situation at hand - time, money, geographical situation- the self-administered questionnaire was selected as the method of collecting data in order to test the research hypotheses.

5.5.7 Interviews

Cannel and Kahan (1968: 527) define the research interview as "a two- person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [sic] on content specified by research objects of systematic description, predication, or explanation" (quoted in Cohen et el. 2000: 269). Interviews were conducted in this research in order to both illustrate and illuminate some questionnaire responses and to check to what extent my translation of the same extracts used in the questionnaire was comprehensible. Some respondents did not answer certain questions, presumably because they did not understand them. Others were not clear enough in their answers, while some respondents provided some interesting notes. This final group of respondents was asked to be interviewed both to ensure that all the questions are comprehensible and answered fully and to discuss the notes they provided. At the same time, I reintroduced the extracts used in the questionnaire to respondents along with my translation of these extracts. I asked them to verbally explain the meaning of each extract used in the questionnaire. Six respondents were interviewed and all of their answers were incorrect. They either did not understand the meaning at all or partially misunderstood it. After they explained what they understood from each extract, I introduced my translation of the same example and asked them to explain the content. Results showed that my translations rendered the original meaning clearly; what they understood was correct. The interviewees stressed that my translations were stylistically normal, structurally easy, and semantically comprehensible. My translations were good because they were reviewed by two native speakers of English who are experts in the language. The interviews were extremely beneficial as they allowed the discussion of some issues in depth, producing very important information about factors which hinder comprehensibility that were previously unknown to me. The opportunity to discuss my translations proved that rendering the meaning of the Quran clearly into English is possible when linguistic shackles are removed and cultural elements are addressed.

5.5.8 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire involved twenty Quranic verses chosen to test the comprehension of the respondents. Each chosen verse contains a complete thought such that the understanding of the whole meaning does not depend on other verses. These verses were chosen mainly from the Madani chapters (chapters which were revealed in the city of Medina after Muhammad's immigration) for two reasons. First, these chapters were not revealed using very lofty language like that of the Makki chapters, making their translation less difficult. Second, the verses of these chapters discuss social affairs and establish laws. The selected verses were not very long. This was to avoid the possibility of causing boredom in respondents.

As was suggested in the hypothesis, the incomprehensibility of the meaning of some verses of the Quran translated into English is a result of a number of different technical and non-technical shortcomings. Each likely shortcoming was represented by two or three verses in the questionnaire. This was done to maximize the reliability of the findings

Native speakers of English helped in selecting the verses in question. They were asked to read through some chapters of the three aforementioned translations of the Quran in English and to identify verses they did not comprehend. In addition, I read the three translations and chose some verses which suffer from literal translation. This is because the English reader cannot distinguish the literal translation of vocabulary items. Some of these verses then were chosen for inclusion in the questionnaire. Each verse was followed by some questions. The respondent was asked to read each verse, and then answer the questions related to it. The following is an example of the questions that were included in the questionnaire:

Ex1) Read the following Quranic verse carefully then answer the questions below.

"It was not Allah who instituted (superstitions like those of) a slit-ear she-camel, or a she-camel let loose for free pasture, or idol sacrifices for twin-births in animals, or stallion-camels freed from work: It is blasphemers who invent a lie against Allah. but most of them lack wisdom.

Ali (5:103)

1) After you have read the verse, which one of the following options would you choose?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible

C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

2) If you chose one of the first two options, would you paraphrase your understanding of the verse?

....

....

3) If you chose one of the last two options, do you think one of the following options is the cause of incomprehensibility? If you think the cause is not indicated here, would you indicate it in the space given? (You can choose or indicate more than one option or reason)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)

B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities

C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)

D) Using old-fashioned words

E) Peculiar style

F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets

G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

....

Each of the aforementioned questions is designed for a specific purpose. The first question finds out whether the respondent comprehends the verse or not. The second question is designed to check the accuracy of the respondent's answer to the first question. In some cases, the respondent may think that they understand the verse well, so they choose one of the first two options. If this was the case, they were asked to paraphrase their understanding of the verse, or of a specific element of the verse in their own language. Paraphrasing determined whether the respondent's answer was correct or not, or whether they really understood it or not. Paraphrasing was made

easy for the respondent in order to minimize the amount of writing they had to do. In order to find out the reason for the incomprehensibility of the verse, a third question was added. If the respondent chose one of the last two options, they were asked to indicate the reasons why the verse is incomprehensible. They were given a number of choices as well as a space to add any possible reason or to provide their comments. Such unstructured comments might be particularly beneficial for this study. This method has two advantages. First, it provides a rigorous test for the validity of the research hypothesis, and second, it might improve the hypothesis by adding possible new reasons which are not known to the researcher.

The number and kind of questions which followed each verse were not the same in all cases. In some verses, there was a need to concentrate on some elements, which were different from the elements relevant to other verses. Thus, some examples had more questions than others, and the kind of questions involved in some examples to examine comprehensibility were different from those involved in other examples. This is due to the nature and the weakness of the translation of each verse.

Despite all the efforts to minimize the length and size of the questionnaire, it was relatively long. The questionnaire included twenty verses printed out on fifteen pages. It was piloted on five respondents who took roughly one-and-a-half hours to fill it out. The questionnaire was long because the research was intended to rely exclusively on high quality of data. "It is better to have a smaller data set of good quality than a larger one of lower quality" (Punch 1999:104).

This research aimed to establish precise results. Therefore, face-to-face meetings were also suggested with any respondent who had any problem in answering the questionnaire. My mobile phone number was also supplied at the top of the form as a means of contact. This was particularly necessary in case the respondent had a query.

5.5.9 Questionnaire distribution

Questionnaire forms were distributed to respondents by hand either in Manchester or in London. I selected this method because giving out the questionnaire by hand has two advantages. First, discussing the importance of the questionnaire to the scholarly research and its importance to the researcher with the possible respondents beforehand encouraged them to be more serious in answering it. Second, this method made sure that each respondent received his form. Great care was taken to make sure that respondents were approached professionally that they were, fully informed about the purpose and context of the research, about confidentiality and anonymity. They also were informed clearly about what they were being asked to do. It was pointed out to the respondents that this sort of research is impossible without their cooperation. "Experience shows that when this is done properly and professionally, people will cooperate, and the quality of the data is improved" (Punch 1999:104).

Since this research aimed to obtain precise findings, respondents were given ample time to read and fill in the questionnaire. They were allowed one month to complete and return it. Giving enough time to the respondents to complete the questionnaire is very important because in this way the chance of reading the questionnaire with concentration and answering the questions carefully can be maximized. Moreover, giving the respondents enough time encourages them to answer it.

5.5.10 Questionnaire collection

The return of questionnaires was made very straightforward for the respondents. When the questionnaires were distributed, each form was put in an envelope. This envelope contained a smaller stamped addressed envelope for returning to the researcher. The aim of this method was that when the respondent finished the questionnaire, they would put the form inside the envelope supplied and then put it in the nearest mail box. This method has two advantages. First, its simplicity encourages the respondent to send the questionnaire back to the researcher as soon as they finish it. This avoids any possible delay and consequently any potential damage to the questionnaire after which the respondent might be embarrassed to return it. Second, this method saves time and minimizes effort on the part of the researcher. As a result, the questionnaires were

returned directly to the researcher so that he did not need to look for the respondents in order to collect the questionnaire forms.

Due to the fact that the questionnaire was long and not many respondents were expected to fill it out, this research aimed to consider and analyze thirty questionnaire forms. This number of forms is believed to be a convenient sample to achieve satisfactory findings. Dornyei (2003: 74) believes that "if the questionnaire is relatively long, then the sample size is best to be 30." Oppenheim (1979: 34) claims that typically, 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the distributed questionnaires are returned. Therefore, considering the length of the questionnaire, in order to make sure that thirty forms were returned, 175 forms were distributed. Despite the immense efforts to get as many as questionnaires returned, the results were disappointing. Only forty-two questionnaires were sent back even though the questionnaire forms were distributed over a period of three months. The rate of the returned questionnaire then was 22 per cent. This low rate obviously reflected both the length of the questionnaire and the difficulty of the context.

5.5.11 Problems of the Questionnaire

In order to minimize problems in answering the questionnaire a number of procedures were adopted. First, the questionnaire started with easy questions and short answers then moved on to questions requiring more thought. This is because starting with difficult questions might be off-putting. Second, the questionnaire was organized in a way which was attractive and interesting to the respondent. This is because the more interesting the questionnaire is, the more likely the respondents are to fill it in and return it. Third, some respondents were offered gifts in order to encourage them to fulfill the questionnaire. Oppenheim (1979: 35) states that experiments showed that giving gifts to respondents is quite effective in interesting respondents to fill in and return the questionnaire. Fourth, the print quality of the questionnaire was high. Finally, respondents were not asked for their names or requested to sign their questionnaire.

Despite the procedures adopted to ease the filling out of the questionnaire, I faced some crucial problems. The expected time needed to read and answer the questionnaire was one-and-a-half hours. The questionnaire took up sixteen pages. Therefore, it was very hard to find enough people who were willing to help and take the time to answer it, particularly as the questionnaire was given mainly to academics, who were busy with their work. A large number of those who were

asked to help in filling out the questionnaire apologized for not being able to do so, when they learnt that the questionnaire was sixteen pages large. Moreover, it was hard to find non-Muslim respondents who were willing to read a religious text which was not related to their beliefs.

Distributing the questionnaire cost me much time and money. Its distribution took place over three months. I had to stay in London for ten days in order to find well educated people and to persuade them to fill it out.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology adopted in this research. It considered the nature and aims of both research paradigms and research approaches. It also showed the weaknesses and strengths of each research approach. It then showed the considerations and reasons why this research has adopted a quantitative methodology. It talked about data collection, research population, research sample, pilot study, reliability and validity, the questionnaire, interviews, questionnaire design, questionnaire distribution and collection, and problems related to the questionnaire.

Chapter Six

Analysis of the Questionnaire

6.1 Introduction

In the introduction, this research hypothesized that translations of the meaning of the Holy Quran into English by Al-Hilali and Khan, Ali and Arberry, the most readable versions in English, fail to render the content clearly. It also discussed seven factors that might affect the readability and clarity of the target text such that the English reader fails to comprehend the message properly. This chapter will discuss the extent to which the hypotheses of the research are corroborated by analyzing the questionnaire. The research has adopted the questionnaire as a means of collecting data because theorists such as Dornyei (2003), Sekaran (2003), Cohen et al. (2000) and others favour this approach. They argue that questionnaires are highly recommended for collecting survey information as it is accurate and reliable.

This study considered 42 questionnaires filled out mainly by respondents from the Manchester area and some others from London. The questionnaire contained twenty extracts from the three translations mentioned above. Seven extracts were selected from Arberry's translation and the same number from Ali. In addition, six examples were chosen from Al-Hilali and Khan. These samples represent possible weaknesses of each translation. Each extract is followed by three questions. The first one tests to what extent the respondent comprehends the content. This question lists four possibilities and the respondent selects one of them. They are 1) Completely comprehensible, 2) Fairly comprehensible, 3) Fairly incomprehensible, and 4) Totally incomprehensible. Should the respondent opt for one of the first two options, they are then asked to paraphrase the extract in the second question. If they choose one of the last two options, they then move on to answer the third question. The third question proposes seven possible reasons for incomprehensibility where respondents can select one or more they deem to obstruct the readability of the text.

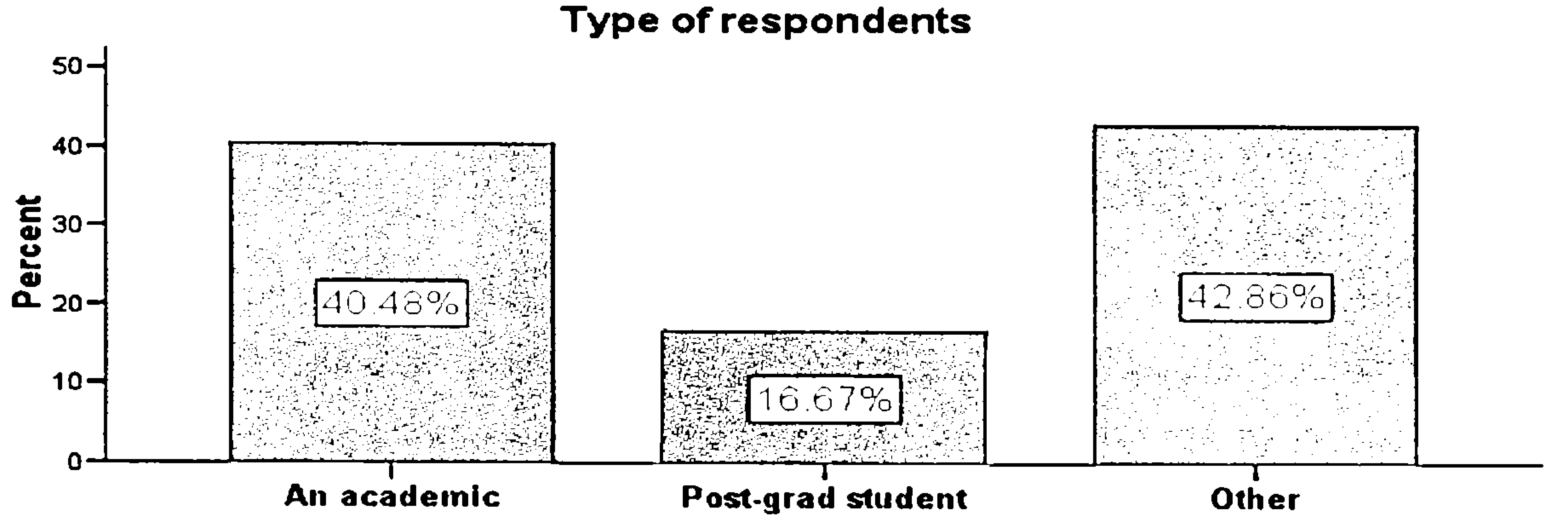
The population of the questionnaire is all comparatively highly educated people. Nearly half of them are academics who are working at the University of Salford. Some are post-graduate students who either study at the same university or at Manchester University. Those who are neither academics nor post-graduate students have at least a degree. The research has targeted only this population because this guarantees precise results. The following table illustrates this.

Table 6.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	An academic	17	40.5	40.5	40.5
	Post-grad student	7	16.7	16.7	57.1
	Other	18	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.1 indicates that 17 of the respondents are academics. Seven are post-graduate students, while 18 are not involved in academia. Table 5.2 reveals that academics constitute 40.48% of the respondents. Post-graduate students represent 16.67%, and the others form 42.86%. Four of the academics have a PhD, eleven have an MA, while two have a BA. Two of those who are not involved in academia have a PhD. Three have an MA, and fourteen have a BA. Regarding post-graduate students, at the time of filling out the questionnaire, six of them were carrying out doctoral research, and the other one was doing an MA.

Table 6.2



....

6.2 The interpretations considered in interpreting the extracts

This research will analyze the results of the questionnaire. It will show the original text followed by its translation. Afterwards, it will explain and discuss the selected translations then the answers of the respondents will be considered. This research will also suggest a translation for each extract. These translations cannot be claimed to be perfectly rendered. They merely present the texts in an improved way to show that the meaning has been transferred more successfully by freeing the text from the possible weaknesses presented. These verses were transferred mainly according to both Ibn Kathir and Abu Assu'ud's interpretations (Tafsir). This is because their interpretations are believed to be both the most detailed and clear of all these considered (Ibn Salamah, 1996).

Ibn Kathir's interpretation, تفسير القرآن العظيم *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, is considered by orthodox Muslim scholars to be the most reliable interpretation of the Holy Quran. It is favoured by most Muslim scholars and researchers. Al-Imam Al-Suyuti claims that no interpretation of the Quran is as informative and accurate as Ibn Kathir's (Ibn Salamah 1996: 4).

Isma'il Ibn 'umar Ibn Kathir Al-Qurashi was born in Busra in 1279. When he was three years old, he moved with his mother to Damascus where he lived until he died in 1353. He memorized the Quran during his childhood. He learned Sciences of the Quran and Arabic from thirty prominent

Muslim scholars, including Ibn Taymiya, Al-Marzi, Al-Asbahani, Ibn 'Asaker, Ibn Ghilan, Al-'Asqalani, and others. Ibn Kathir wrote thirty well known books on the Sciences of the Quran, the Science of Hadith (Prophetic sayings), Islamic jurisprudence, history, and other fields (Ibn Salamah 1996: 4-11)

Ibn Kathir's method of interpreting the Quran is believed by many Muslim scholars to be the best. This is because he produces each Quranic verse followed by its general meaning. Then he interprets it by referring to other verses of the Quran and supports his work by Prophetic sayings and what the Prophet Muhammad's companions said about the verse in question. In his introduction, Ibn Kathir states that the best way to interpret the Quran is by means of the Quran itself. If insufficient information is found in the Quran, then we refer to the Prophetic sayings (*Hadith*) because the Prophet is the interpreter of the Quran. If not, we refer to Muhamad's companions' sayings. This is because they are the most knowledgeable people about Islam as they lived at the same time as the Prophet, and therefore practiced what they heard from the Prophet and applied what they saw him doing (Ibn Salamah 1996: 6).

Ibn Kathir explains legal ruling and other issues related to the verse. He supports his argument by reference to other Quranic verses and Prophetic sayings and mentions the opinions of the pioneering Muslim scholars about these legal rulings. He then expresses preferences for some opinions over others in scholarly terms, without prejudice towards any of these scholars. Iben Kathir includes almost all the Prophetic sayings found in مُسنَد الإمام أحمَد أبن حَمبل *Musnad Al-Imam Ahmad* in his interpretation. In his interpretation he considers the interpretations of Ibn Mardudiyya, Abdulla Ben Hamad, Ibn Al-Mundher, and others (ibid).

Abu Assu'ud Al-'Imadi أبو السعود العمادي was born in Istanbul in 1518 and died in 1602. He was born into a highly educated family and his father was a prominent Muslim scholar. Abu Assu'ud memorized the Quran in his childhood, and learnt Quranic sciences from his father, as well as other well known Muslim scholars. He became one of the most famous Muslim scholars of his time because of his wide knowledge while he was still young. He worked as a teacher then became a judge in Istanbul and other cities then he was employed as mufti of the Ottoman Empire for thirty years. Abu Assu'ud wrote a number of books. The most famous of these was his work إرشاد العقل السليم إلى مَزايا الكِتاب الكريم "Irshad Al-'Aql Assalim Ila Mazaya Al-Kitab Alkarim",

which is an interpretation of the Quran and which is relied on in this research (Abu Assu'ud 1990).

I regard Abu Assu'ud's interpretation is clearer and more inclusive than any other interpretation for several reasons. First, in his interpretation, he analyzes every verse linguistically to make the meaning of each word in the verse very clear. He explains every word referring to dictionaries and clarifying both the denotative and connotative meaning. Second, he shows how his interpretation is supported by other verses, and also by prophetic sayings. Third, he mentions the reason for the revelation of every verse in case it was revealed in response to a specific event by explaining times and places. Fourth, Abu Assu'ood refers to the interpretations of the previous prominent scholars. He explains the most important opinions then he supports some over others in a logical way. A study of almost all the previous works of Muslim scholars shows how knowledgeable he was. He studied Ashshafi'i, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn 'Asakir, Ibn Ghillan, and others. Finally, Abu Assu'ud's rich information, stories, examples, and strong arguments make his work inclusive and reliable. He also uses a beautiful and easy language. For these elements, this research has used his interpretation along with Ibn Kathir as basic references in analyzing and translating the given verses.

The extracts which have been considered in the questionnaire are not the most incomprehensible translations. There are many verses in the three considered translations rendered in a worse manner. They were not included in the questionnaire because understanding of their meanings depends on other verses. Since this research aimed to include short extracts for the convenience of the respondents, it only embraced some short texts which are independently meaningful. Let us now consider the first example.

6.3 Analysis of the extracts

Extract 1

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ (234) وَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ
لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ (235)

And those of you who die, leaving wives, ***they shall wait*** *by themselves for four months and ten nights; when they have reached their term then it is no fault in you what they may do with themselves honourably. God is aware of the things you do. There is no fault in you touching the proposal to women you offer, or hide in your hearts; God knows that you will be mindful of them; but do not make troth with them secretly without you speak honourable words.* ***And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term****; and know that God knows what is in your hearts, so be fearful of Him.*

Arberry (2: 234-5)

This research maintains that the translation produced above by Arberry fails to transfer the meaning of the original text clearly. This is because Arberry transfers some of the content both literally and in an unclear style. This verse talks about women whose husbands have died. It instructs widows to wait in their dead husbands' homes for four months and ten days. In this prescribed period, widows are not allowed to show their beauty or to get married. Once this prescribed term is completed, they can leave their homes and get married to whomever they want. It also instructs men not to betroth widows before the prescribed term has finished (Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 1: 292-3 & Ibn Kathir 1999: vol 1: 638).

First of all, Arberry creates confusion in the first sentence as he translates the phrase *yatarabbasna* (يَتَرَبَّصْنَ) as *they shall wait*. The denotation of the word *yatarabbasna* is very clear in the Arabic text. The Arabic reader understands that this term refers to those women whose husbands have died. This is because the verb *yatarabbasna* is in the feminine plural forms. Arabic verbs have feminine and masculine forms, as well as distinguishing between singular and

plural. Since English does not distinquish between masculine and feminine in the plural, Arberry transfers the term *yatarabbasna* as *they shall wait*. Since neither the pronoun nor the verb in the English text indicate the gender, it is not obvious that the clause *they shall wait* refers to those wives whose husbands have died. The translation is vague. In Arberry's version, the English reader might think that the pronoun *they* refers to *those who die*. They might then understand that the whole first verse talks about the men who die and not about the women whose husbands die.

Another element that produces incomprehensibility is the following sentence: *And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term*. This instructs men not to marry widows until the prescribed term for them is fulfilled. The word *al-kitabu* (الكِتابُ) in Arabic refers to the prescribed term mentioned earlier which is four months and ten days where widows have to stay at their dead husbands' homes. Arberry renders the word *alkitabu* literally as *the book*. This generates a meaningless text because 'book' in English means a bound collection of pages. No reader can imagine how a book reaches its term. Apart from literal translation and vagueness produced in the translation, Arberry's style also generates a barely readable text. The English reader might find the text very hard to follow. This leads us to assume that Arberry's translation fails to transfer the genuine meaning clearly.

The following chart shows the extent to which respondents claimed to comprehend the translation mentioned above and to what extent the hypothesis underlining this questionnaire is accurate. Before looking at the answers of the respondents, this research will suggest a translation for the aforementioned verse. This rendering is freed from literal translation, vagueness and transferred, relatively speaking, into a better style.

"Those of you who die and leave wives behind, their wives shall wait (as regards their marriage) for four months and ten days. If this term has been fulfilled, there is no blame on you (Muslims) if the wives dispose of themselves in a just and reasonable manner. God is well-acquainted with what you do. There is no blame on you to intimate for betrothing (widowed) women or hiding it in your hearts. God knows that you will cherish them in your hearts, but do not promise them marriage in secret. Only speak to them with honourable speech, and do not consummate the marriage until the term prescribed is fulfilled. Know that God knows what is in your hearts, so take heed of Him" (My translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 1:

292-3 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 1: 638).

Table 6.3

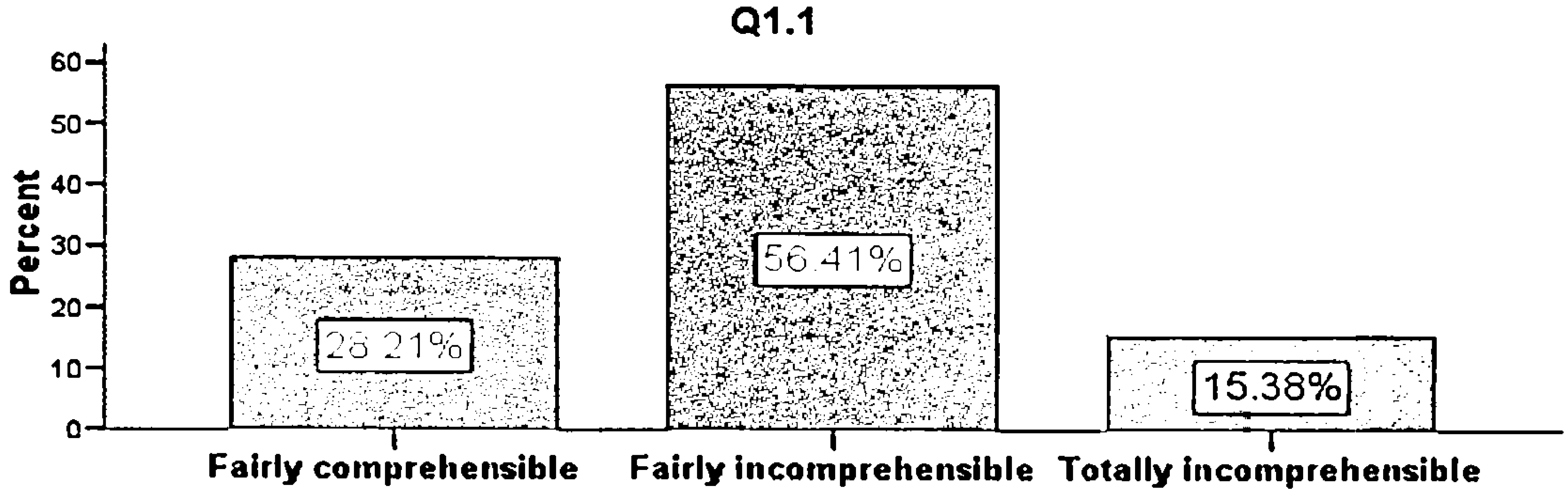
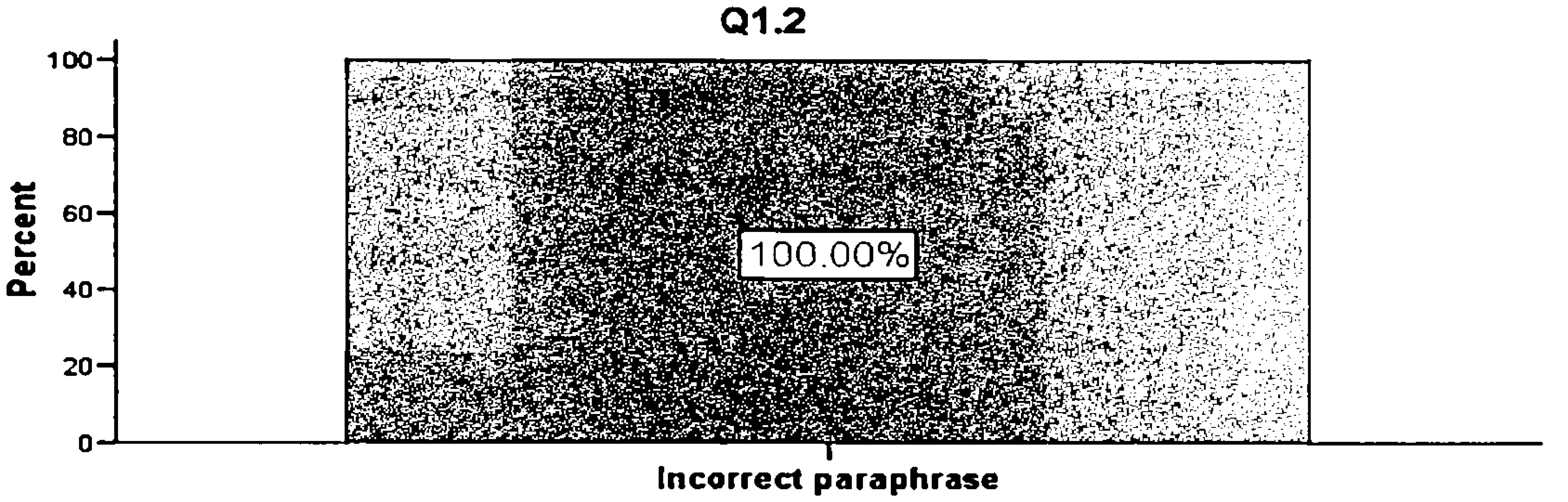


Table 6.3 indicates that 56.41% of the respondents selected fairly incomprehensible. 15.38% chose totally incomprehensible, while 28.21% thought that the content is fairly comprehensible. None of the respondents stated that the meaning of Arberry's translation is completely comprehensible.

Those who opted for fairly comprehensible are mostly non-academics. In order to examine the accuracy of their responses, this questionnaire asked them to paraphrase only one sentence. This is because the whole extract is relatively long. Asking them to paraphrase the whole text might be boring. The sentence is *do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term.* The results of the paraphrases of those who selected "fairly comprehensible" demonstrate that they are all incorrect. None of them understood the genuine message. Some of them thought that the Quran instructs Muslims not to get married until they learn the Quran. Others thought Muslims must not wed until they have enough money to live, while some understood that people should not decide to get married until they are old enough. The following chart illustrates that all those who answered fairly comprehensible are inaccurate.

Table 6.4



As seen, tables 6.3 and 6.4 demonstrate that the translation is totally incomprehensible to respondents. In order to find out the reasons for this unintelligibility, this questionnaire asked those who chose either fairly or completely incomprehensible to identify the reasons for this. Table 6.5 illustrates their answer rate.

Table 6.5

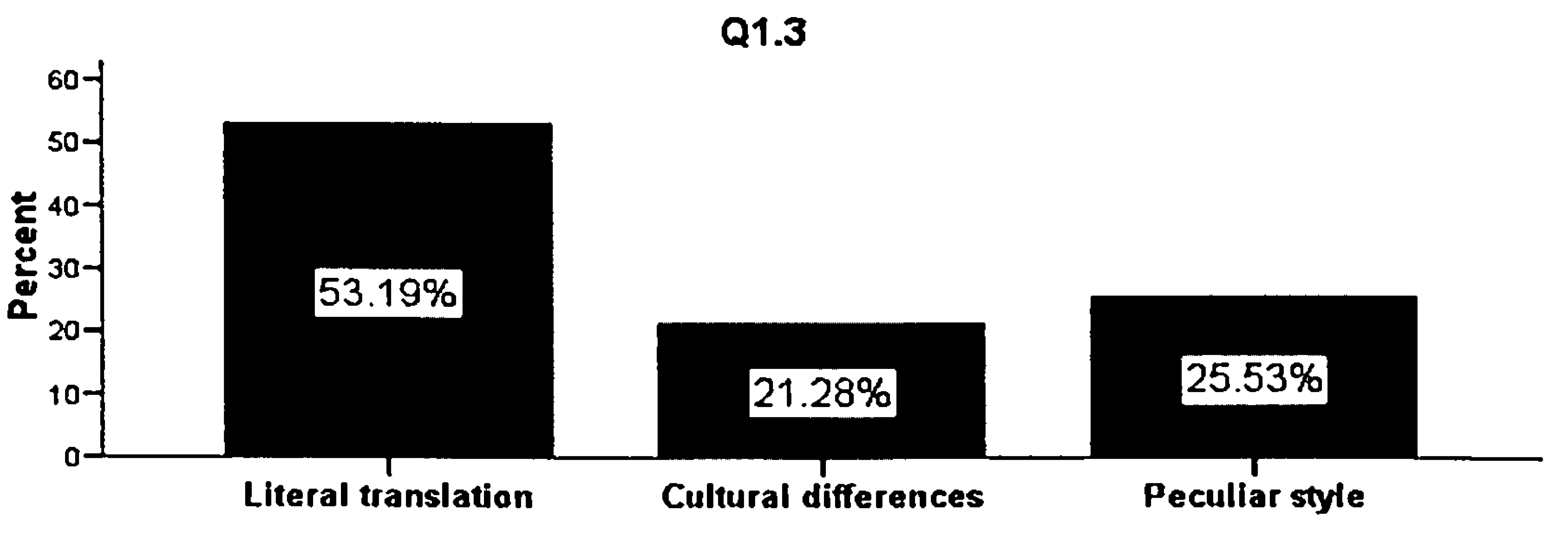


Table 6.5 indicates that 53.19% of the respondents who opted for either fairly or completely incomprehensible believe that literal translation is the main cause of obscurity. 25.53% think that peculiar style prevents understanding the content, while 21.28% consider cultural difference as the reason for incomprehensibility.

It was mentioned earlier that this research contends that both literal translation and odd style produce unclear content. The results of the questionnaire support this theory. Respondents have also added another reason. This is cultural difference. According to some of the academic respondents with whom the researcher discussed this verse, they claimed that they chose cultural difference because they supposed that the term book refers to a specific book that they are not

aware of. In addition, they added that the language of the verse is worded in a non-English way. This is why they picked peculiar style and cultural difference. Consequently, this result produces another reason for the incomprehensibility of Arberry's translation of this verse. To sum up, the reasons for the unintelligibility of the passage discussed above are, as shown in table 5.5, literal translation, cultural difference and peculiar style.

Extract 2

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ (1)

"Glory be to Him, who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque the precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing."

Arberry (17: 1)

This verse talks about the night journey of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Muslims believe that on this journey, God carried Muhammad on a beast called Al-Bura̲q البُراق from the holy mosque of Al-Ka'ba in Mecca to Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Then God raised him to heaven where he spoke to God from behind a veil and met previous prophets. After Muhammad performed prayers in heaven, God carried him down back to Al-Aqs̲a الاقصى mosque in Jerusalem then carried him back on the beast to Mecca. The events of this journey all happened on the same night. This verse was revealed to prove the story because some disbelievers belied Muhammad after he told his companions in the morning about his journey to heaven (Ibn Kathi̲r 1999 vol 5: 5-6).

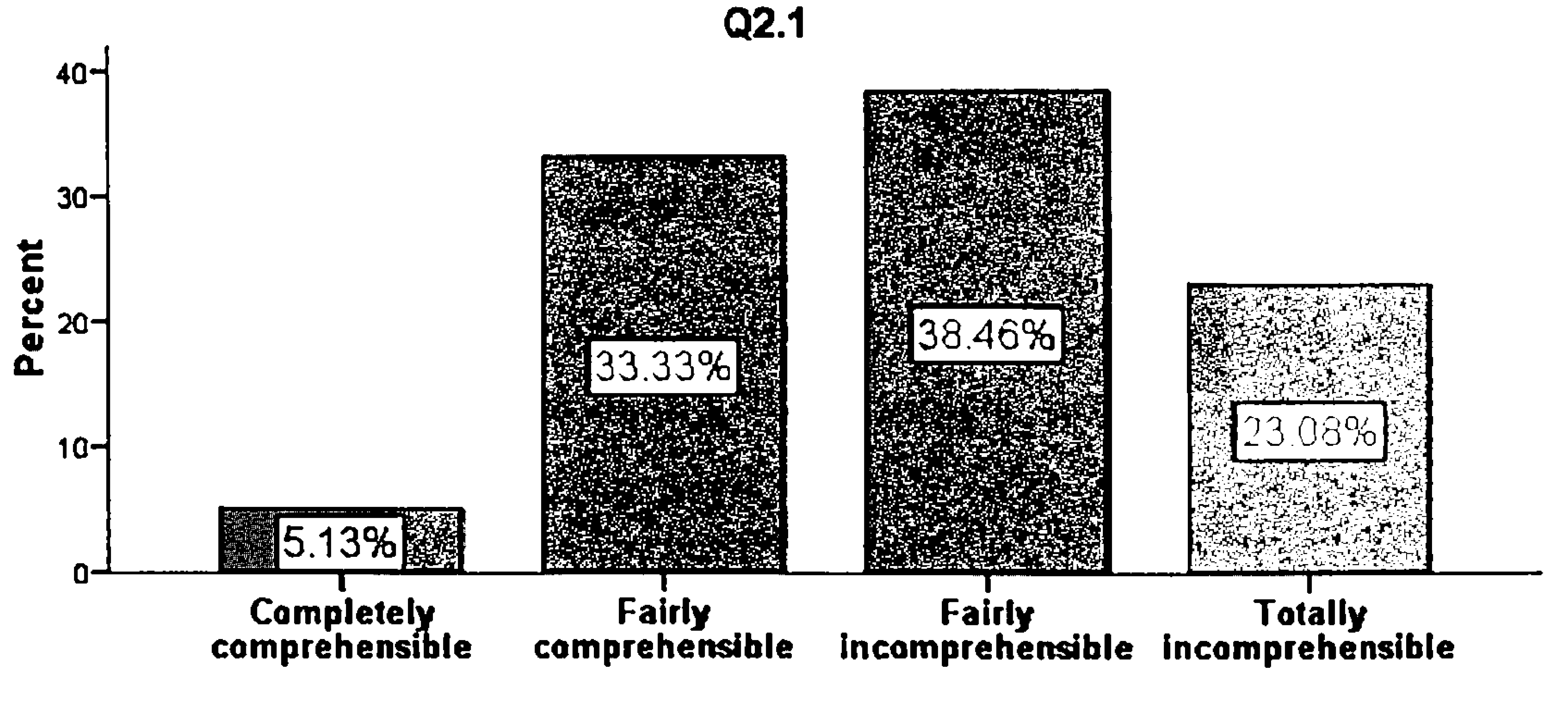
Arberry's translation of this verse suffers from the effects of literal translation which is often also culturally foreignising. These two elements result in a vague meaning. Consequently, a reader who has no previous knowledge of the Quran or Islam is likely to fail to understand the verse clearly. The first cultural element is *His servant.* The term *servant* in the Quran refers to the Prophet Muhammad. This reference is very clear to Muslims because they are aware of the story and because this expression occurs on several occasions in the Quran. By contrast, a non-Muslim reader will not be able to understand to whom the term *servant* refers. The second cultural element is *the Holy Mosque.* Arberry does not add information to make plain that this mosque

refers to the Ka'ba Mosque in Mecca. The third element is *the Further Mosque.* This suffers from culturally foreignising literal translation. Proper names in Arabic are sometimes adjectival in form. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is in Jerusalem, is the third holiest site in Islam; Arberry treats the form *Al-Aqsa* (الأقصى) as an adjective and translates it literally into English as "the further". This literal translation results in vagueness. Moreover, Arberry does not add anything in the target text to fill the cultural gap in order to make the reader aware of where the mosque is. Another possible ambiguous element in Arberry's translation is *the precincts of which We have blessed.* The ambiguity of the place being referred to is a result of the incomprehensibility of the previous term *the Further Mosque.* If the meaning of this earlier phrase was made clear, the reader would understand that *the precincts of which We have blessed* refers to Palestine. Before showing to what extent the extract was comprehensible to the questionnaire respondents, this research will suggest the following translation.

Glory be to Him (God) who carried His servant (Muhammad) by night from the Holy Mosque (of Mecca) to the Al-Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem) the precincts of which We (God) have blessed, in order that We show him of Our signs. God is the All-hearer, the All-seeing.

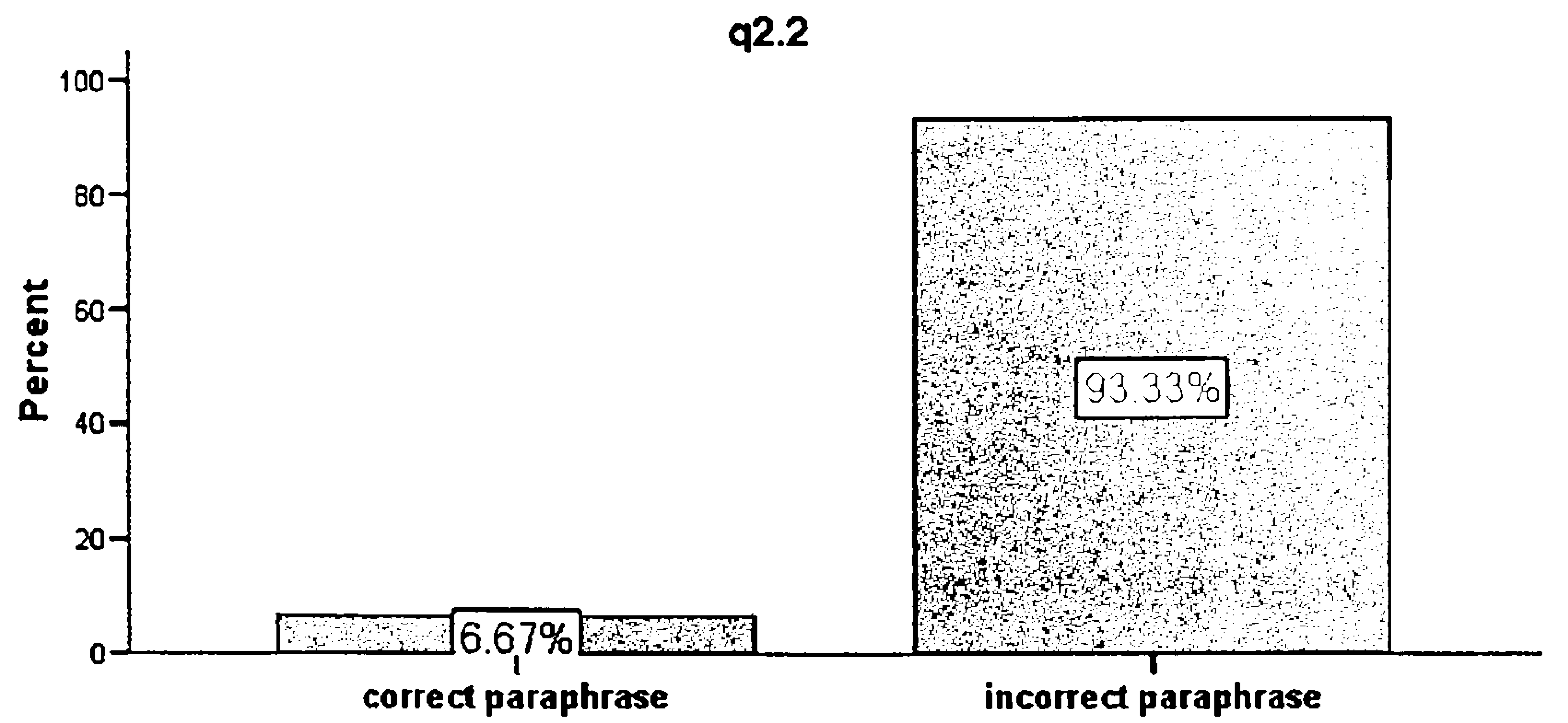
The following chart shows the extent to which respondents claimed to understand the translation in question.

Table 6.6



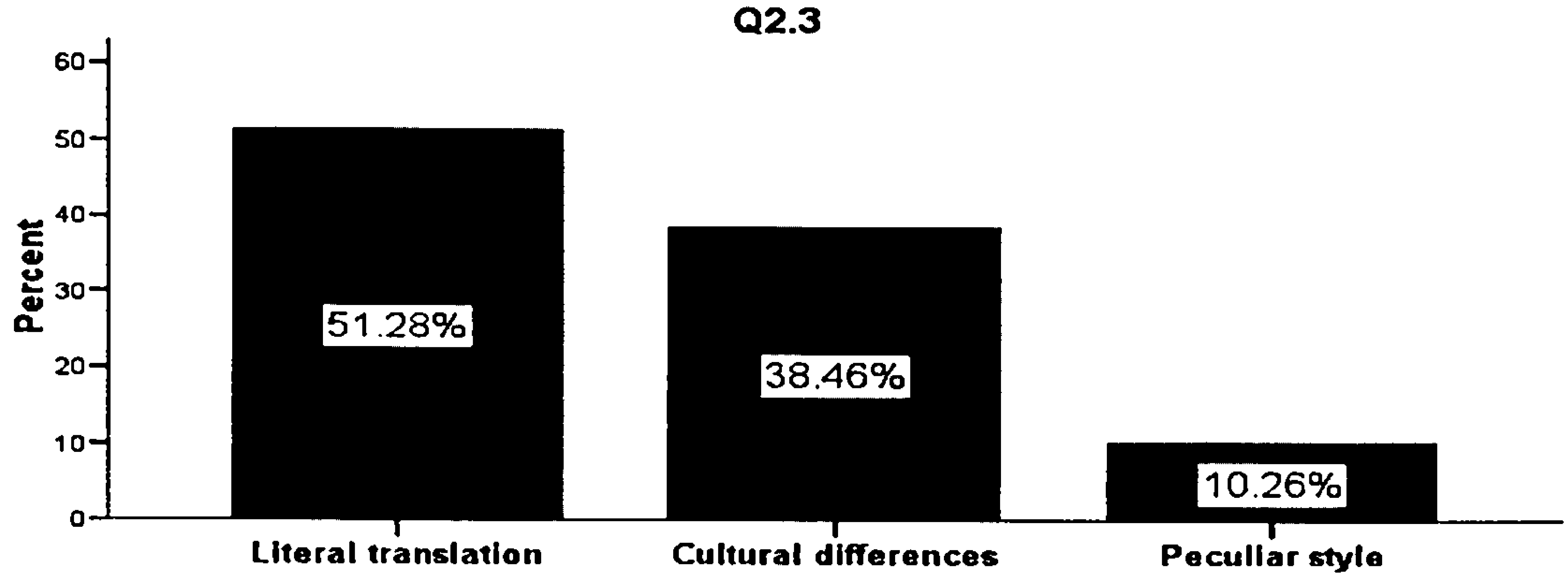
The above chart shows that 61.54% of the respondents regarded Arberry's translation as either fairly or completely incomprehensible. 33.33% opted for fairly comprehensible while 5.13% selected completely comprehensible. The results of the questionnaire show that all of the 38.46% of respondents who chose both completely and fairly comprehensible in fact failed to understand the meaning of the verse. Their paraphrases indicate they thought that *his servant* refers to any person who believes in God. Some of the respondents thought that the Holy Mosque is a place where the servant lived on earth while the Further Mosque is a place in Heaven. Others just indicated that "God moved his servant from one place to another" without any further explanation. In addition, some respondents' paraphrases were meaningless, demonstrating that they did not understand the meaning of the verse. The only respondent to indicate that they found the verse completely comprehensive did answer correctly. This is because he has previous knowledge of the Quran and Arab culture having lived in the Arab world for a few years. The following chart shows the extent to which respondents provided accurate paraphrases.

Table 6.7



It was mentioned earlier that Arberry's translation suffers from literal translation which is often culturally foreignising. The following chart shows how respondents rated different reasons for the incomprehensibility of the translation.

Table 6.8



As seen, 51.28% selected literal translation, 38.46% cultural differences and 10.26% peculiar style. Once again, academic respondents commented that the context does not help the reader to understand the verse clearly. This comment confirms that literal translation, cultural differences and peculiar style are all reasons for the incomprehensibility of the translation of this verse.

Extract 3

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"Your women are a tillage for you, so come unto your tillage as you wish, and forward for your souls; and fear God, and know that you shall meet Him."

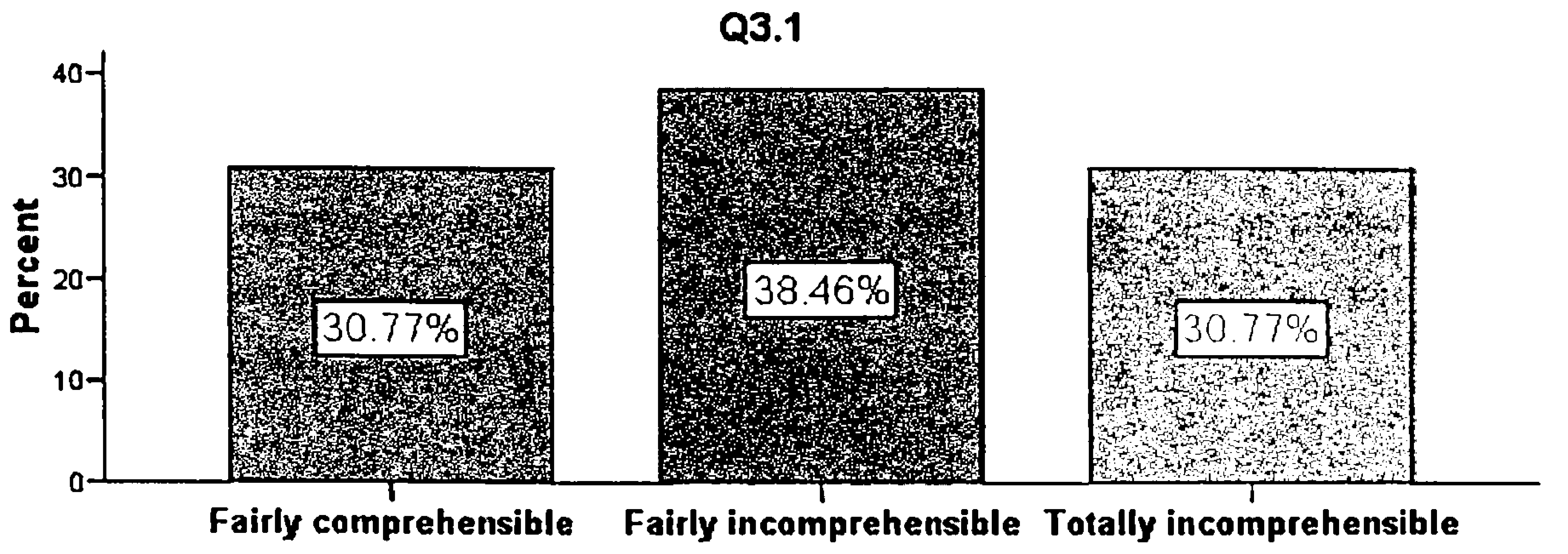
Arberry (2:223)

In the pre-Islamic Era of Ignorance (Al-Jahiliyya), when having intercourse with their wives, Jews used to practice it in only one position while Arabs used to have intercourse in different postures. Both sides used to ridicule each other over this issue. Therefore, God revealed this verse in order to explain the Islamic viewpoint on this matter. According to Ibn Abdulsalam (2000 vol 1: 188), and Al-Siyuti (2000 vol 2: 27) the aforementioned verse was revealed to Muhammad as a result of an argument between some recent Muslim converts and Jews over having intercourse with women. The Jews ridiculed the Muslims because they had had intercourse with their wives in different positions. They described Arabs as animals because one of the positions they practiced was from the rear. In addition, the Jews claimed that if someone has intercourse with his wife from the rear, the baby will be born cross-eyed. Thus, this verse was revealed to tell

Muslims to have intercourse with their women the way or their women like as long as the penis is inside the vagina and not in the anus. This verse is a metaphoric one. God likens women to land. The idea is, if someone has land and he looks after it well by fertilizing, ploughing, sowing seeds and watering it, the land will be productive and flourish. So, it bears fruit and pleases them. The same thing happens with women. If a man treats his wife respectfully and generously, her health will be good both mentally and physically. As a result, the wife treats her husband properly in return and pleases him sexually. Likewise, she will give him a baby when they have intercourse.

I think this beautiful metaphoric message and meaning are not clear in Arberry's translation. This is because Arberry translates the main word in the verse literally using old-fashioned words. The main word is *tillage.* First, the reader might strive to understand the same denotative meaning as the Arabic reader does. They will not be able to grasp that it alludes to women's health and fertility as well as enjoyment. Second, the word *tillage* is an old-fashioned expression. This term is not very familiar to the average reader. If the English reader is not highly educated, they might fail to understand it. Table 6.9 shows the degree of comprehensibility of the verse according to the results of the questionnaire.

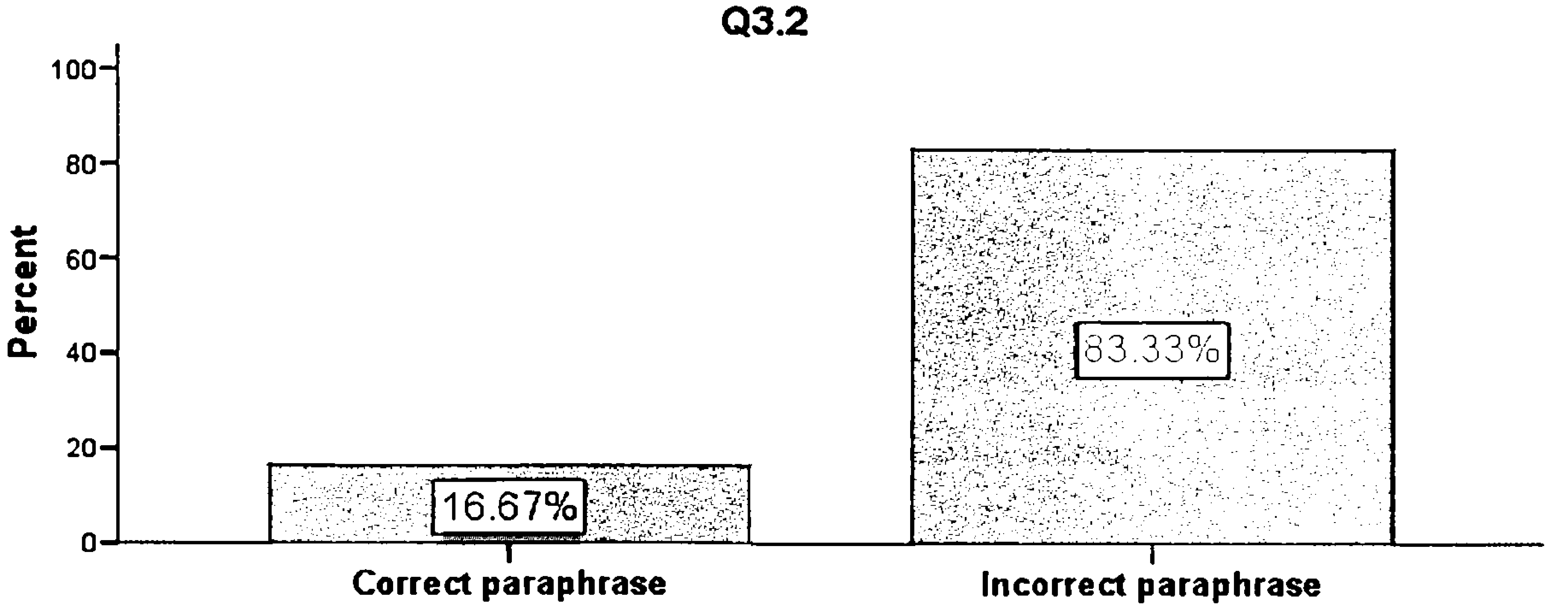
Table.6.9



The above table shows that 30.77% of the respondents chose fairly comprehensible, 38.46% fairly incomprehensible and, 30.77% totally incomprehensible. It also shows that none of the respondents selected completely comprehensible. This means that the translation is at least fairly incomprehensible to 69.13% of the respondents. The paraphrases of those who settled on fairly comprehensible reveal that 83.33% of them are incorrect and only 16.67% are correct as the

following chart shows.

Table 6.10



As mentioned above, 83.33% of the respondents who selected fairly comprehensible did not understand the real meaning of the translation. Their comprehension of the text was the opposite to the real message of the Quran. Some of the respondents understood that the Quran allows men to treat their women as servants. It also allows them to use and manipulate women as they will. Some of the respondents commented that the Quran treats women in a cruel and humiliating way. Others stressed that it is disgusting to liken women to tillage. So, Arberry's translation does not only fail to render the meaning clearly, but also causes misunderstanding. The 16.67% of those who are correct in their answers constitute just 2% of the total respondents. In other words, only one respondent understood the meaning. This means that 98% of the respondents did not comprehend Arberry's translation. The following chart shows how respondents rated different reasons for the incomprehensibility of the abovementioned translation.

Table 6.11

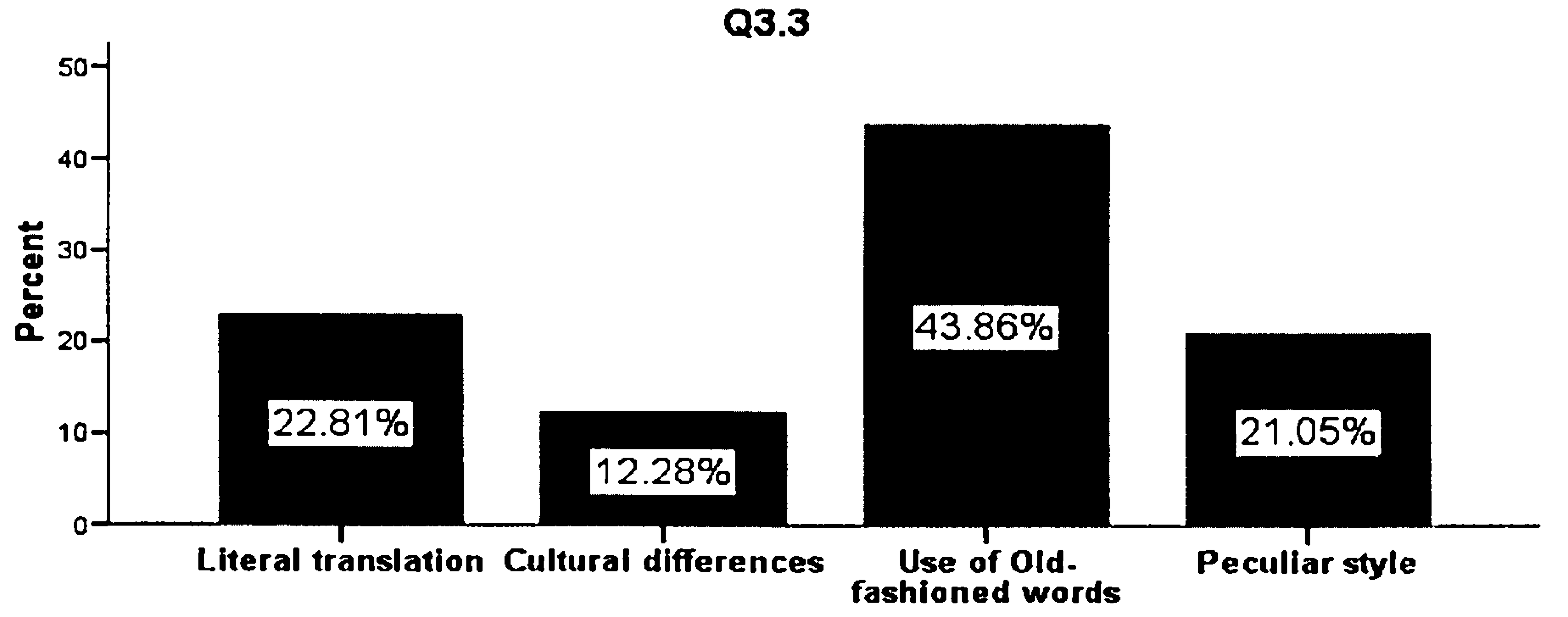


Table 6.11 shows that 43.86% of the respondents thought that use of old-fashioned words is a reason for incomprehensibility, 22.81% selected literal translation, 21.05% chose peculiar style and 12.28% opted for cultural difference. This indicates that using old-fashioned words is the main reason for the incomprehensibility of the translation and literal translation is the second reason. The third reason is peculiar style and then cultural difference. The research claimed earlier that using old-fashioned words which are also literally translated is a possible reason for the incomprehensibility of the text. The results of the questionnaire added peculiar style and cultural difference as possible reasons for incomprehensibility

Extract 4

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَن نَّكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ
أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللَّهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"Verily those who plight their fealty to thee plight their fealty in truth to Allah."

Ali (48: 10)

Six years after the Prophet Muhammad emigrated from Mecca to Medina, 1400 Muslims gathered together in a place called Al-Hudaybiyah الحُدَيْبِيَة. In this place Muslims pledged their loyalty to Muhammad to fight and follow him in the cause of Islam. This pledge was called after the name of the place in which the pledge was made. The above verse was therefore revealed to Muhammad to praise those Muslims and to tell him that those men, who pledged their loyalty to him, pledged their loyalty to God (Al-Tabari 2000 vol 22: 209).

This research presumes that the above-mentioned translation by Ali is incomprehensible to the reader for two reasons. First, Ali uses old-fashioned words which are unfamiliar to non-highly educated readers. By not recognizing the meaning of the words *plight* and *fealty*, readers are likely to fail to understand the whole meaning of the verse. Second, the reference *thee* causes vagueness in the text. A second person, masculine and singular reference often refers to the Prophet Muhammad in the Quran. This is well known to Muslims as they are culturally aware of this matter. Non-Muslims will not be aware of this fact unless they have a good previous knowledge of the Quran. Even if the reader knows the meaning of the word *fealty,* their understanding of the verse will be lacking because the reference *thee* will be vague to them. Before looking at the rate of comprehensibility claimed by respondents, this research will suggest the following translation, which is believed to be clearer as it uses modern vocabulary and tackles the vagueness caused by the reference *thee.* The recommended translation is:

"Verily those who pledge their loyalty to you (Muhammad), pledge their loyalty to God."

Table 6.12

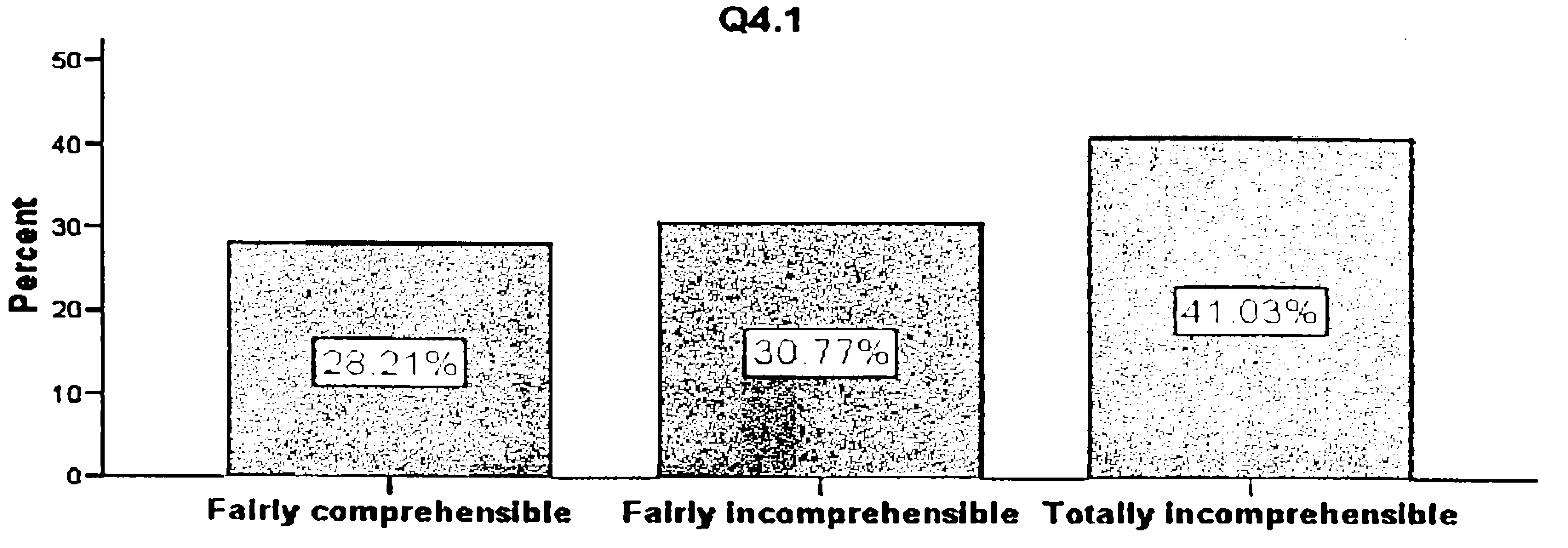


Table 6.12 indicates that 41.03% of the respondents did not understand the verse at all, while 30.77% selected fairly incomprehensible. This means that 71.80% of the respondents believed they did not fully comprehend the verse. 28.21% of the respondents thought they fairly well comprehended the verse and none of them understood it completely. The question is, were those who opted for fairly comprehensible correct in their answers?

Table 6.13

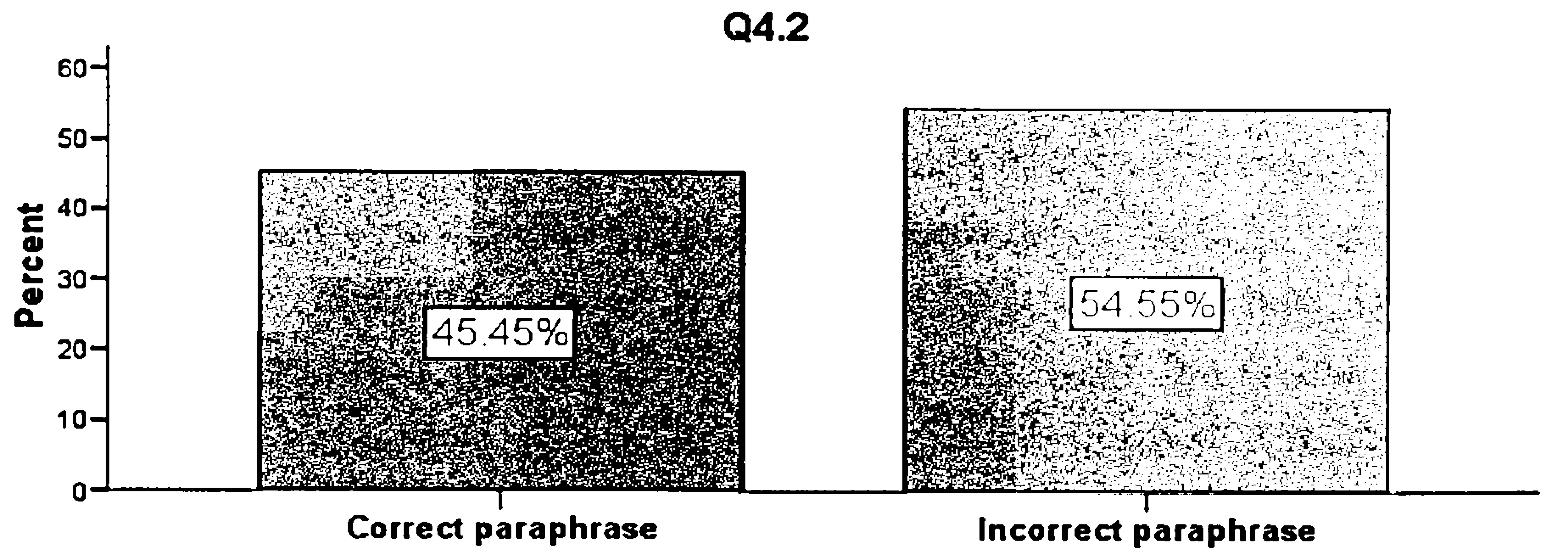


Table 6.13 considers only the rate of understanding the word *fealty*. Only 45.45% of respondents knew the meaning of this expression. This is because they are all academics and highly educated. It is worth mentioning that they merely constitute only 12.62% of the overall number of respondents. Table 6.13 also establishes that 54.55% were wrong in their paraphrases. This includes some academics. Regarding the word *thee* which creates vagueness in the translation as Ali does not tackle it, only two respondents realized that it refers to the Prophet Muhammad. One of these two respondents, as mentioned earlier, has lived and studied in the Arab world for a few years. The other is a lecturer who is interested in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. That is to say no more than 5% of the respondents comprehended the referent in the translation. Let us consider the following chart.

Table 6.14

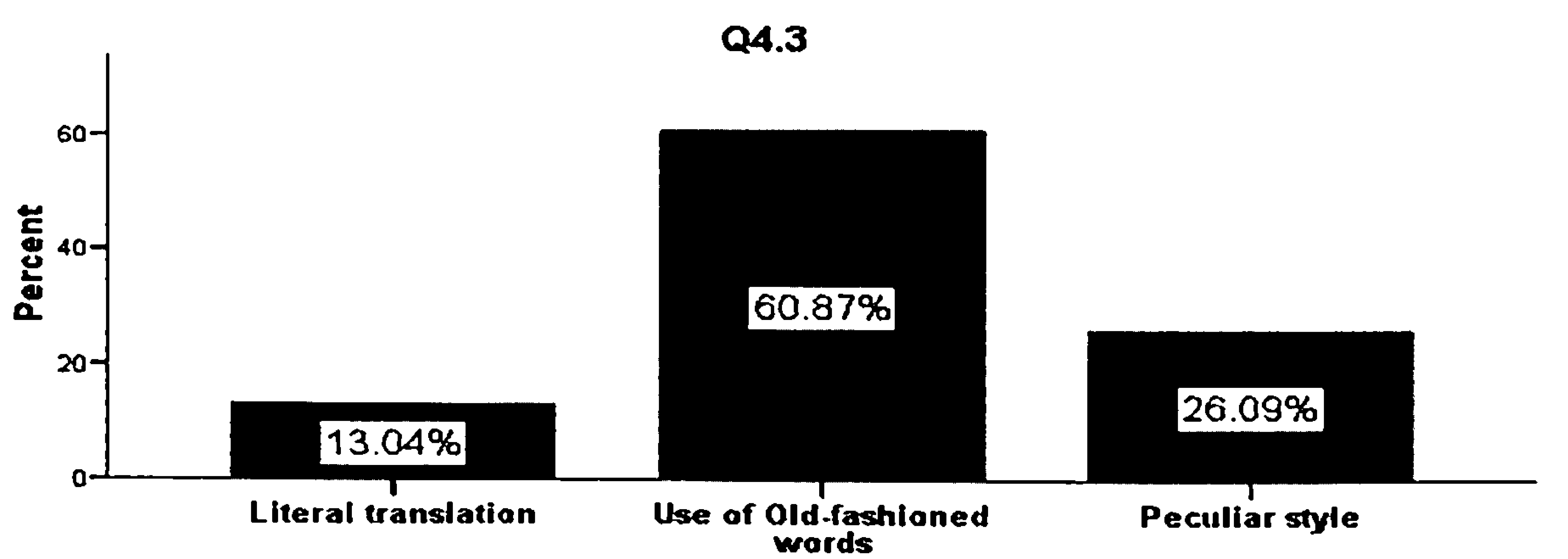


Table 6.14 identifies the reasons respondents claimed to be possible causes for incomprehensibility. 60.87% selected use of old-fashioned words, which supports the argument of the research. Respondents also added two further reasons for incomprehensibility. 26.09% selected peculiar style, and 13.04% literal translation. It might be claimed that literal translation is not a real reason for the incomprehensibility of the above translation. Probably, it was picked up because some respondents thought there is another reason for incomprehensibility other than use of old-fashioned words and peculiar style. As they could not properly identify the reason, they then opted for literal translation. To sum up, as shown in table 5.14, use of old-fashioned words, peculiar style and literal translation are claimed by respondents to be the reasons for the incomprehensibility of Ali's translation of the verse mentioned above.

Extract 5

قُلْ لَوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُونَ خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي إِذًا لَأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُورًا

"Say: "If ye had control of the treasures of the Mercy of my Lord, behold, ye would keep them back, for fear of spending them: for man is (every) ***niggardly!****"*

Ali (17: 100)

In this verse God orders the Prophet Muhammad to tell people that if they had the control of the treasure of God on earth, they would never be generous enough to give others any of it because the nature of man is miserly. *The treasures of the Mercy of the Lord* in this verse refers to the endless wealth that God gives man in life. The aim of this verse is that God wants to remind people about one of their bad features. The attribute is stinginess which they have to discard. It also aims to tell people that God's giving is endless. Therefore there is no need for people to hoard money (Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 5: 124).

Ali's translation of this verse is not very obvious for three reasons. First, as often, the word *say* causes vagueness because it is not clear to whom it refers. As mentioned earlier, a Muslim reader would understand to whom this message is addressed as they have a previous knowledge of this reference, while a non-Muslim reader might not have the same experience. Second, Ali translates the phrase خَزَائِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّي *khaza'na rahmati rabbi* literally into English as *the treasures of the Mercy of God.* The connotative meaning of the phrase is not rendered clearly as Ali does not

clarify it for the target reader. Hence, the target reader fails to understand that this clause refers to the wealth that God offers man in life. Both the vagueness caused by the term *say* and literal translation result in a peculiar style. The third and most important weakness in the translation of this verse is the use of the term *niggardly*. This expression is very old-fashioned and it is not familiar to the ordinary English reader. The use of this term prevents a complete understanding of the meaning of the text. The reader struggles to grasp the general sense of the translation. Table 6.14 shows the rate of comprehensibility of this text claimed by the respondents.

Table 6.15

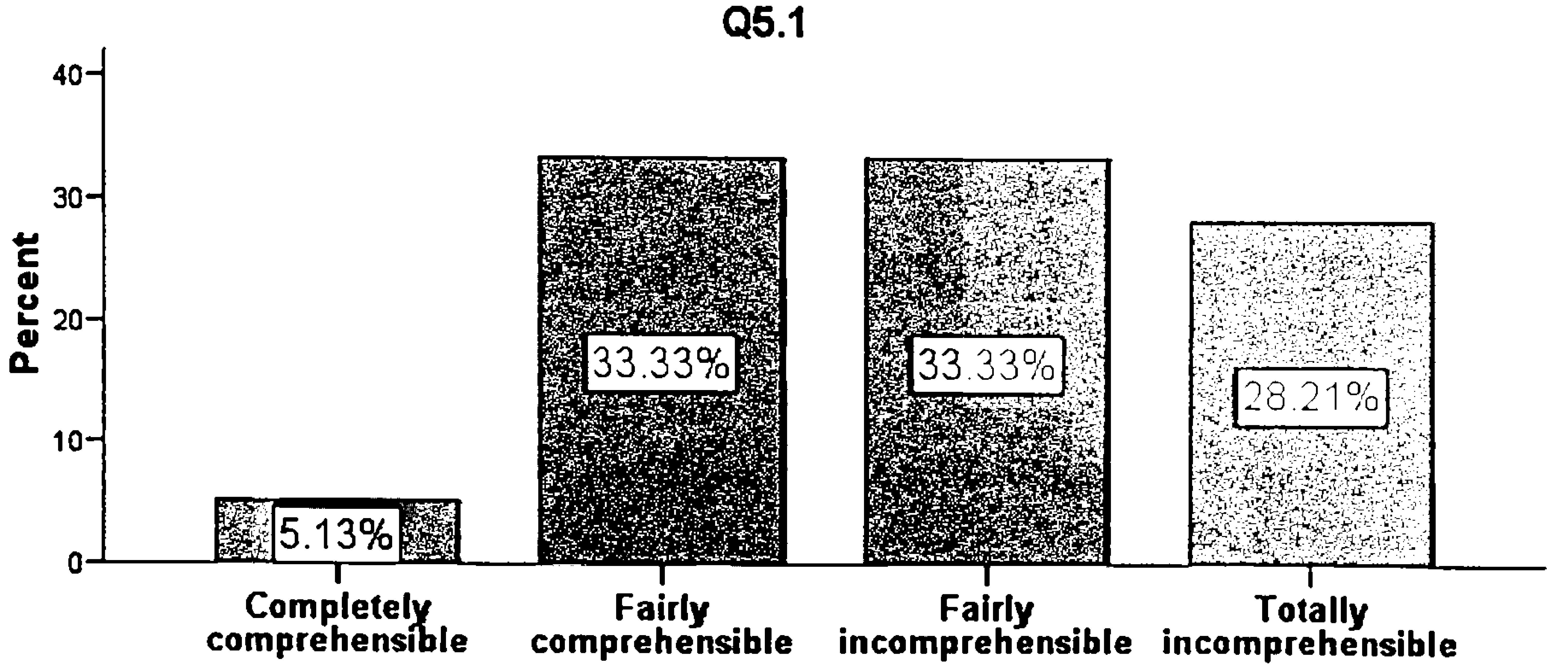


Table 6.15 indicates that 28.21% of the respondents did not understand the translation at all. It shows also that 33.33% of the respondents selected fairly incomprehensible and the same percentage opted for fairly comprehensible. Only 5.13% deemed that they understood the verse completely. So, 38.46% of the respondents selected either completely or fairly comprehensible. In order to test to what extent the answers of those who opted for both completely and fairly comprehensible were an accurate reflecting of their actual understanding, they were asked to explain the meaning of the word *niggardly*. The following chart shows to what extent they were correct.

Table 6.16

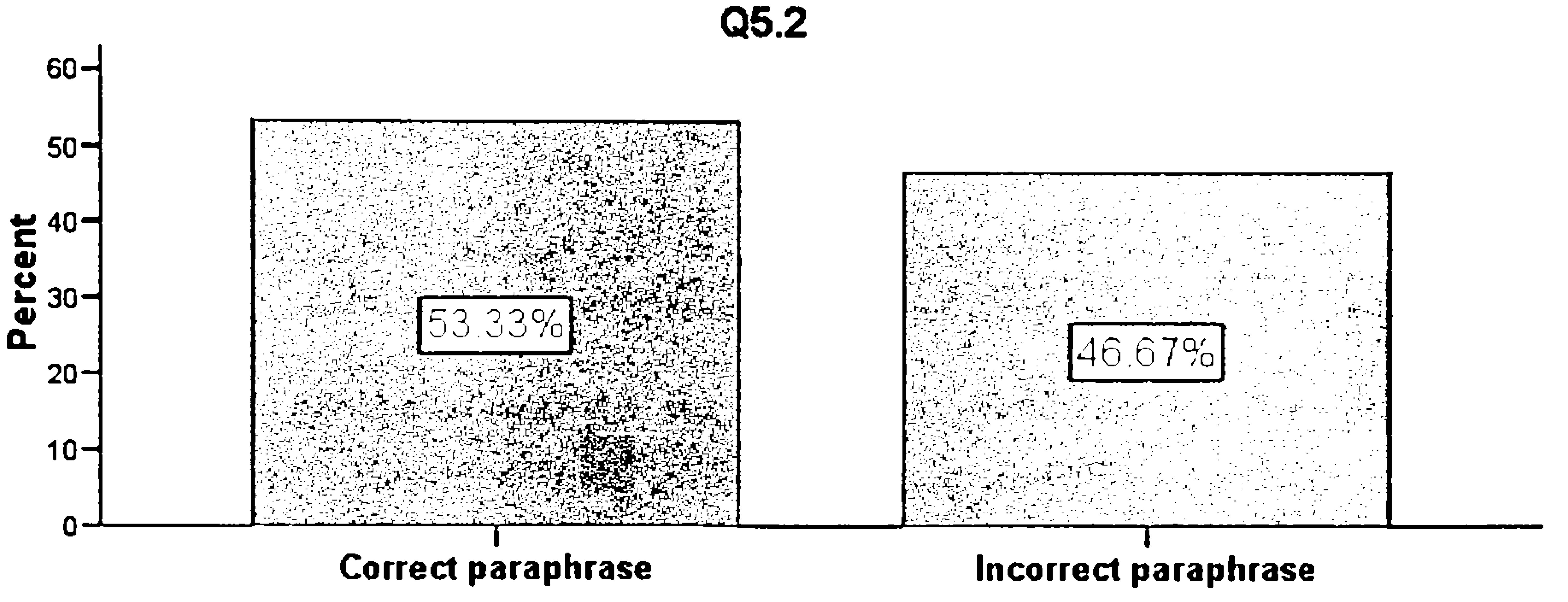


Table 6.16 shows that 53.33% of the respondents who opted for either completely or fairly comprehensible are familiar with the term *niggardly*, while 46.67% are not. This means that respondents who understood the term *niggardly* represent roughly 16.5% of respondents. They are all academics.

This research has claimed that both vagueness and literal translation resulting in peculiar style, along with the use of old-fashioned words affect the comprehensibility of Ali's translation. This claim was supported by the answers of the respondents. The following chart shows this.

Table 6.17

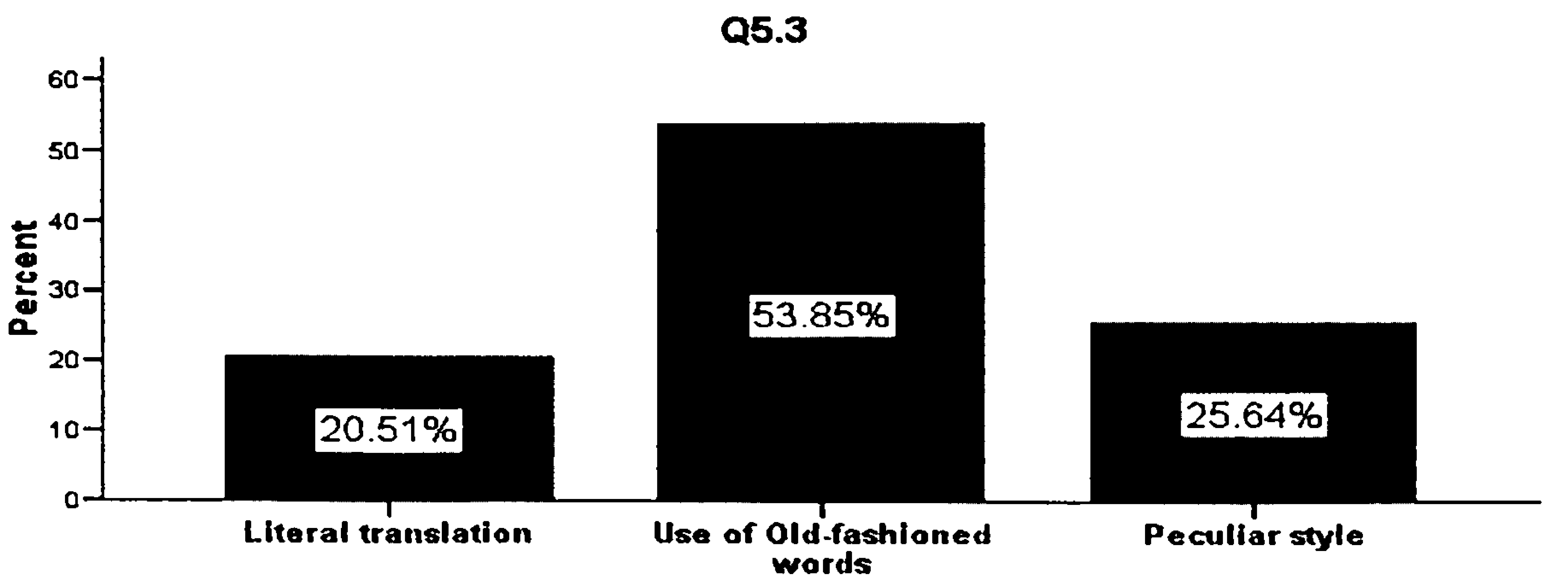


Table 6.17 points out that 53.85% of the respondents believed that use of old-fashioned words is a possible reason for incomprehensibility. 25.64% thought that peculiar style causes

unintelligibility, while 20.51% estimated that literal translation affects their understanding of the translation.

Extract 6

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَو
اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ

"O men! Here is a parable set forth! Listen to it! Those on whom, besides Allah, ye call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!

Ali (22:73)

In this verse, according to Abu Assu'ud (1990) and Annasfi (1999), God addresses his speech to the pagan Arabs. He invites them to ponder a parable in order to show them that what they worship is powerless and unserviceable. There are three main elements which prevent comprehension of the above verse as translated by Ali. First, the style appears very awkward to the English reader in that he fails to follow and understand the meaning clearly. The translator tries to transfer the Quranic style into English, but this does not help to render the meaning because each language has its own different style. This weakness creates a text with no obvious meaning. Second, the original text is addressed to a specific group of people at a particular era. It is addressed to pagan Arabs who used to worship idols besides God. So, this involves a cultural void with respect to the reader who does not belong to Arab culture. The cultural element exists in the phrase *Those on whom, besides Allah, ye call.* With this expression, God refers to idols. This denotative meaning is clear to the Arab or Muslim reader because it's a part of their history and beliefs, while non-Arabs do not have the same experience. Their understanding of the text is lacking as they do not know that the clause *whom besides Allah ye call* refers to idols. Third, the verse mentioned above suffers from literal translation. This weakness makes the text meaningless. In other words, the translation is a composition of English words with no understandable meaning. The literally translated sentence is *Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!* Ali translates both the Arabic expressions *at-talib* الطالب "pursuer" and *al-matlub* المطلوب "the pursued" literally into English using *petition.* This translation does not

make any sense to the target reader. In this verse, *at-taleb* (pursuer) represents the idol as it requests the fly to give back what it snatched from it. *Al-matlub* (pursued) denotes the fly as it is wanted for what it snatched from the idols (Abu Assu'ud 1990, vol 4: 485 and Annasfi 1999, vol 2: 370). Finally, unusual orthography could be added as a fourth element for impeding the comprehension of the previously mentioned translation. Ali uses punctuation marks in the wrong places. For this reason, the reader might feel confused in trying to follow the meaning of the translation. Before studying the degree of comprehensibility of the above verse claimed by respondents, this research will suggest the following translation.

"O mankind! A parable is set forth, therefore listen to it. Surely those idols whom you worship besides Allah cannot create even a fly, though they gather together for the sake of creating it, and should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back. Weak are the pursuer (the idols) and the pursued (the fly)". (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 4: 485 & Annasfi 1999 vol 2: 370)

The following chart shows to what extent the translation was regarded as intelligible by respondents.

Table 6.18

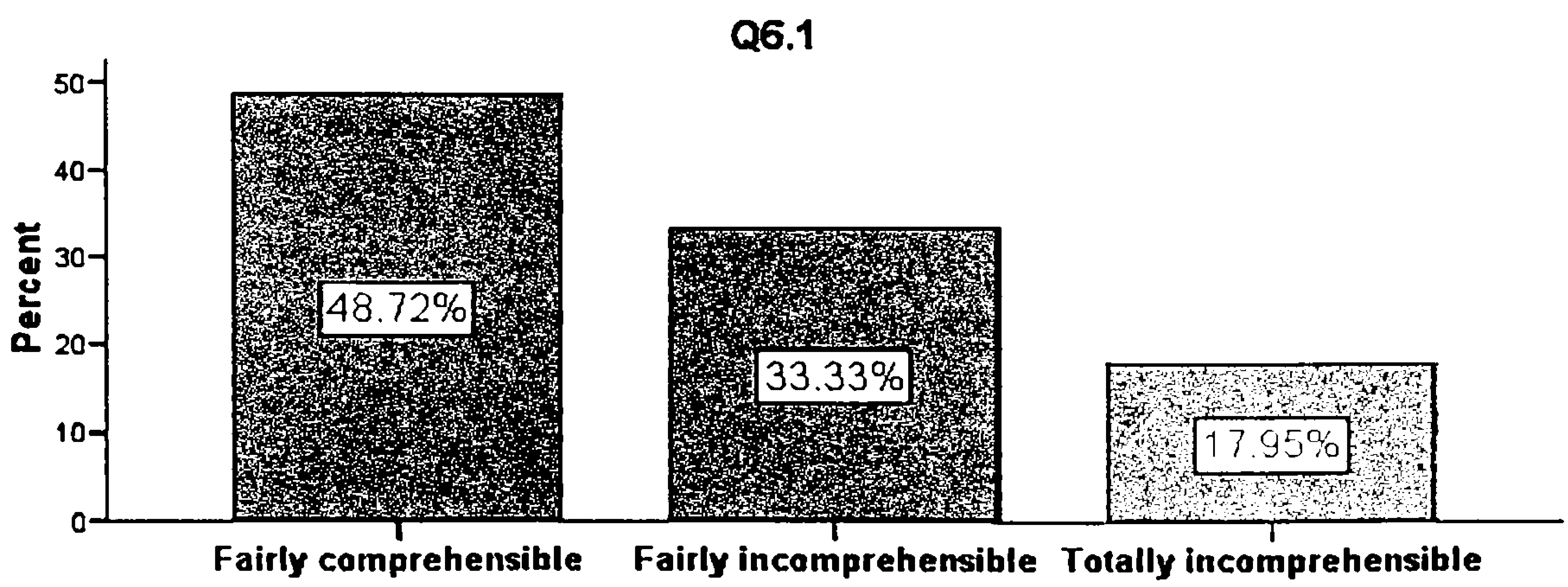
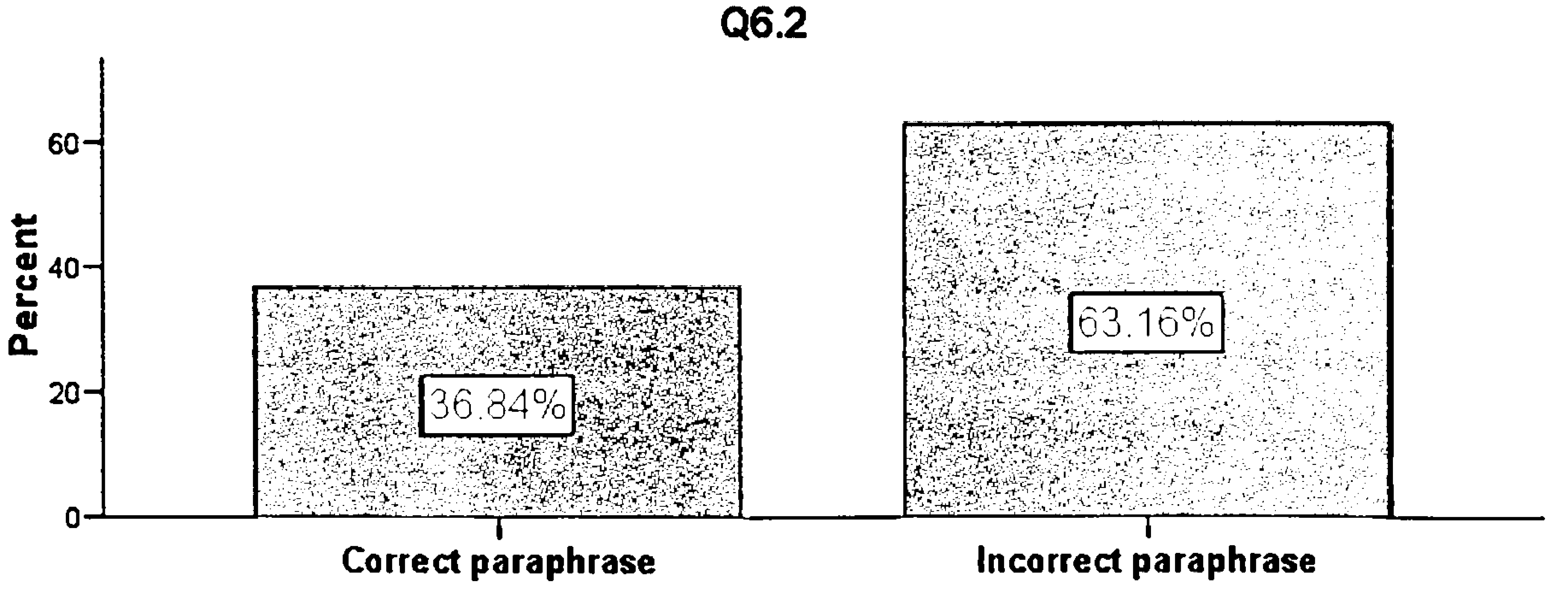


Table 6.18 shows that 33.33% of respondents opted for fairly comprehensible and 17.95% totally incomprehensible. 48.72% thought that the translation is fairly understandable. None of the respondents understood the translation completely. According to the paraphrases of those who opted for fairly comprehensible, none of them was correct in paraphrasing all of the extract. The second part of the verse, which is *Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!,* was unintelligible to all of them. Nearly every respondent commented that this clause does not make any sense. Only a small number of those respondents understood the first part of the text. Hence, the last part of the extract was disregarded. 63.16% failed to understand the first part, while only 36.84% understood it. It is worth mentioning that this constitutes only 15% of the respondents. The following chart illustrates this.

Table 6.19



The results of the questionnaire then demonstrated that 85% of the respondents could not understand the meaning of the translation mentioned above. Let us now look at the reasons for incomprehensibility claimed by respondents.

Table 6.20

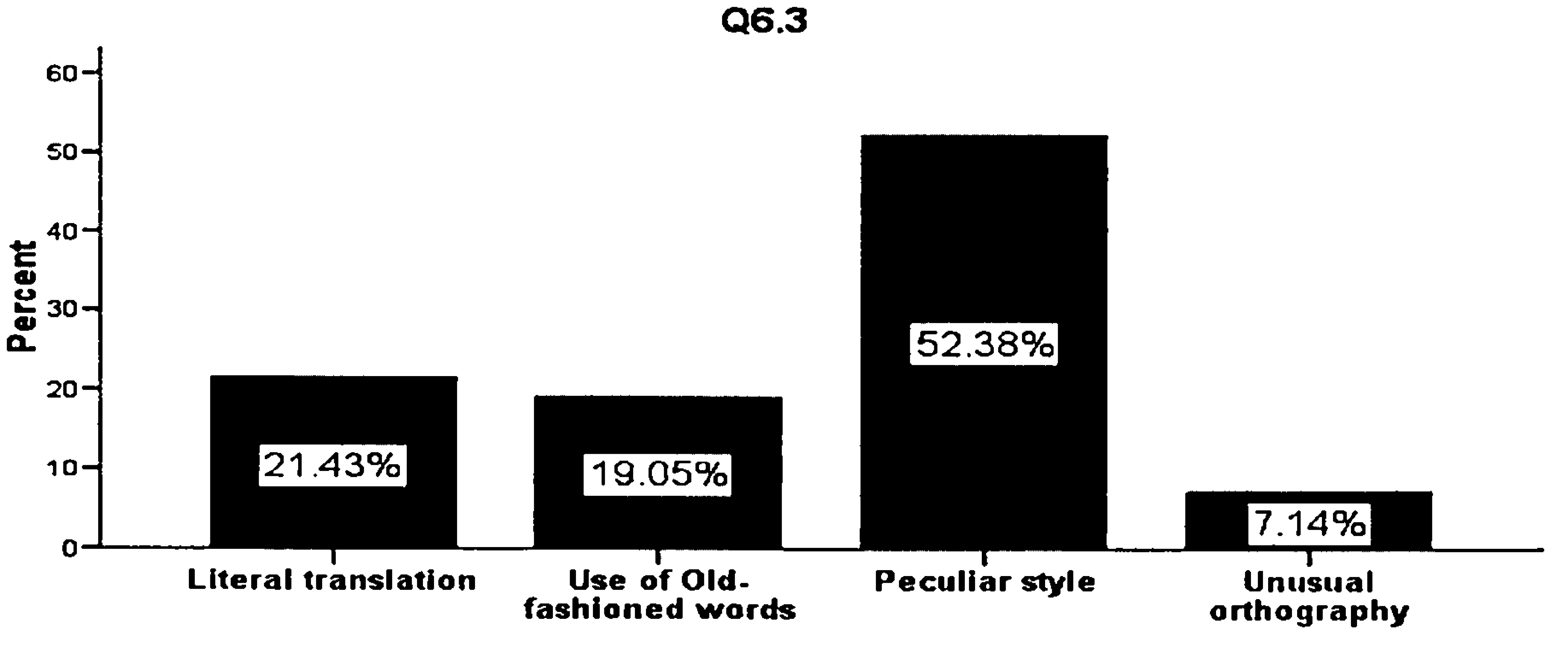


Table 6.20 shows that 52.38% of the respondents did not grasp Ali's translation because of the peculiarity of the style. 21.43% indicated that the reason for incomprehensibility is literal translation, while 19.05% thought that use of old-fashioned words prevented them from understanding the text. 7.14% deemed that unusual English orthography affects comprehensibility. None of the respondents mentioned cultural difference as a cause of incomprehensibility, despite the fact that understanding of the verse is lacking as long as the reader is not aware of the nature of the era of ignorance. The interpretation of the clause *Those on whom, besides Allah, ye call,* is arguably open unless it is clarified in the text.

To sum up, the questionnaire indicates that the reasons for the incomprehensibility of the verse in question are: peculiar style, literal translation, use of old-fashioned words and unusual orthography.

Extract 7

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

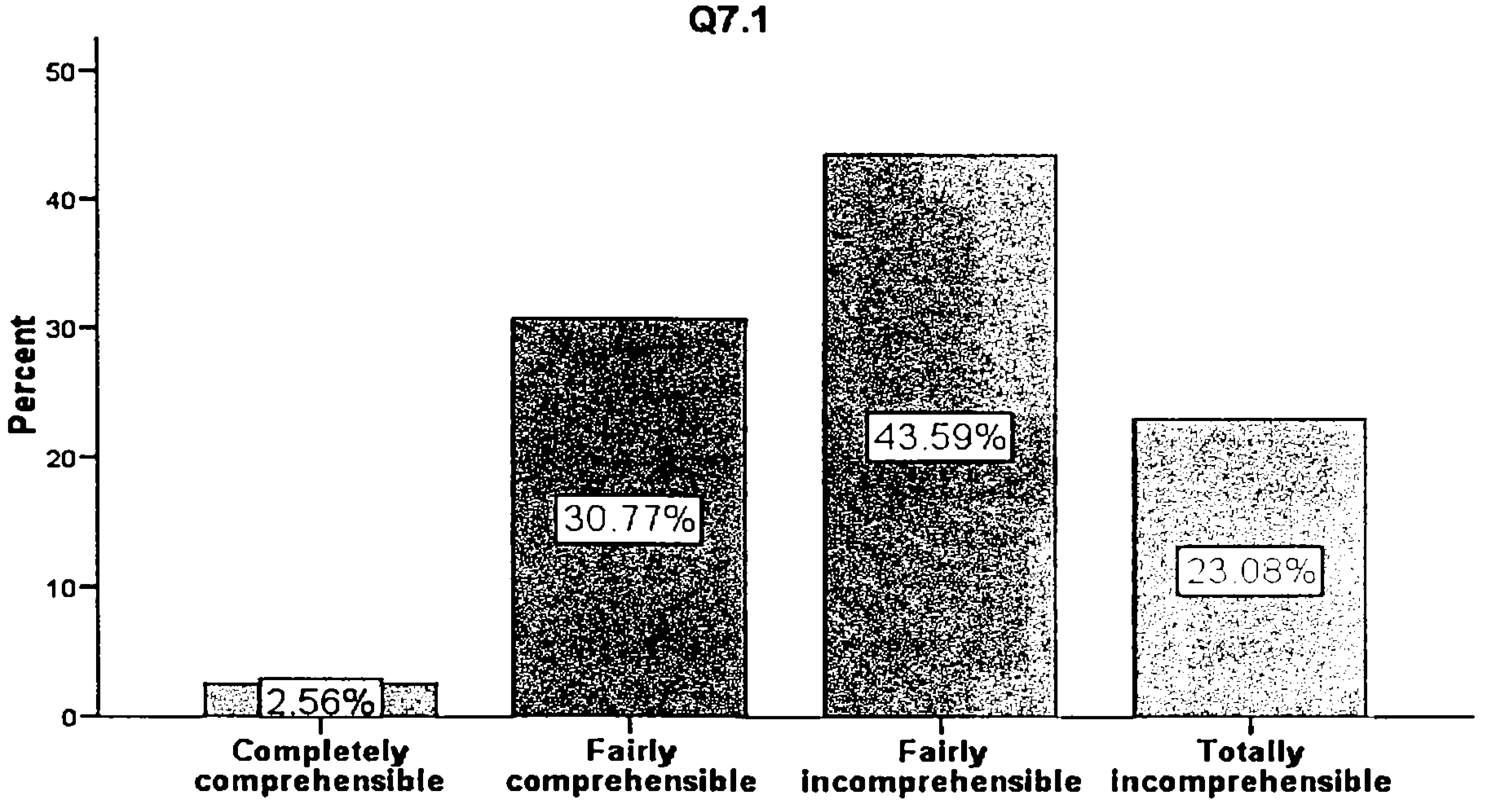
"Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit, 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord': and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when Thou didst take me up Thou wast the Watcher over them, and Thou art a witness to all things.

Ali (5: 117*)*

This verse is taken from a dialogue between God and Jesus in the Quran. Jesus speaks in reply to God's question as God asked him: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say to men, worship me and my mother as gods apart from God?" Jesus replies "I have never said to them except what You have told me to say; worship Allah my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up to Heavens You are the watcher over them. You are a witness of everything", (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 322 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 232).

This research claims that the above translation by Ali is not rendered in a manner which is clear to the target reader for two main reasons. First, Ali transfers the Quranic style literally into English resulting in odd style and unusual orthography. So, the reader has difficulty following and understanding the meaning clearly. Second, in his translation, Ali uses old-fashioned vocabulary. This vocabulary is archaic and bizarre and is unfamiliar to the contemporary reader. Peculiar style and the use of old-fashioned words produce a tedious text, which also affects the readability of the text. The following table shows the degree of comprehensibility of this translation claimed by respondents.

Table 6.21



As seen in table 6.21, 43.59% of the respondents thought that the text is fairly incomprehensible and 23.08% regarded it as totally incomprehensible. This means that the text was not comprehensible to 66.67% of the respondents. The table also shows that 30.77% believed that the text is fairly comprehensible, while 2.56% claimed it to be completely comprehensible. Some of those who opted for either completely or fairly comprehensible commented that the style is strange and the use of old-fashioned words makes the text difficult and tedious. They claimed that these two factors deter the reader from the Quran. Since they believed they understood the text, they were asked to paraphrase the extract. Table 6.22 shows to what extent they were correct.

Table 6.22

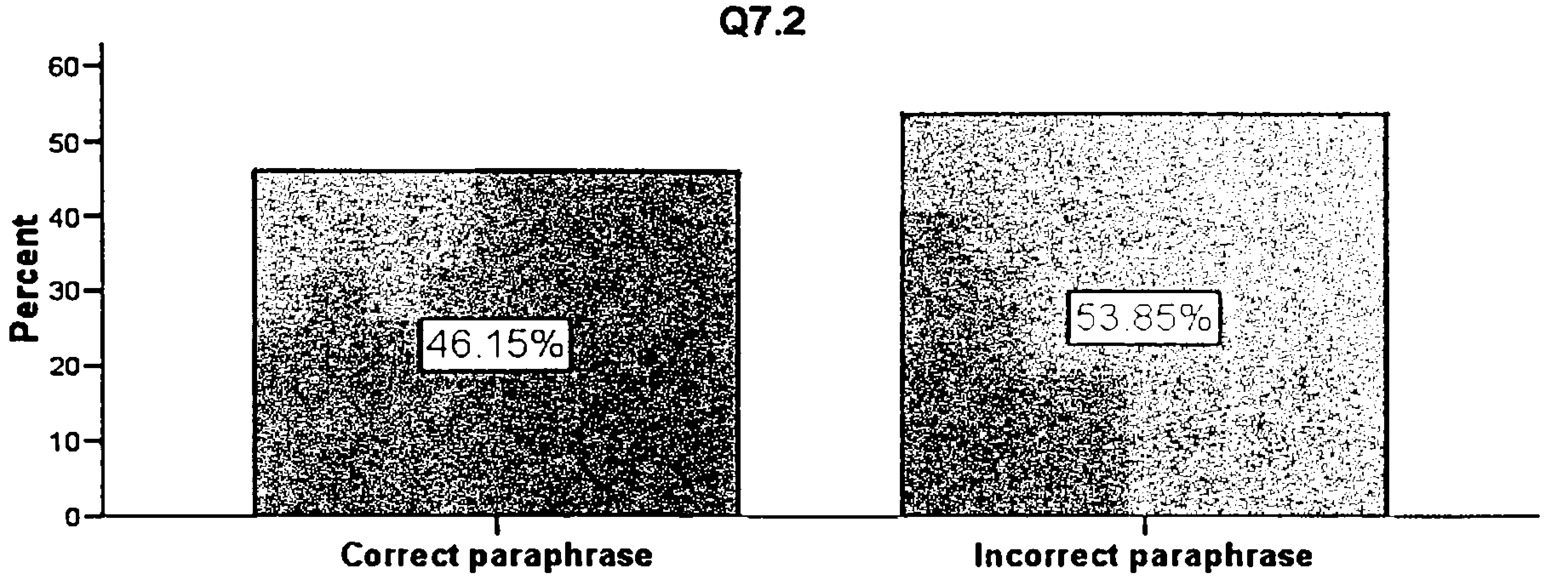


Table 6.22 indicates that 53.85% of those who opted for either completely or fairly comprehensible failed to paraphrase the correct meaning. In some cases they contradicted the meaning and in others they noted down meaningless statements which means that they did not understand the content of the translation. The table also shows that 46.15% of the respondents were correct. This constitutes merely 14% of the total number of the respondents. This is to say, the translation in question is either fully or partially incomprehensible to 86% of respondents. The following table identifies the reasons for incomprehensibility claimed by those who selected both fairly and completely incomprehensible.

Table 6.23

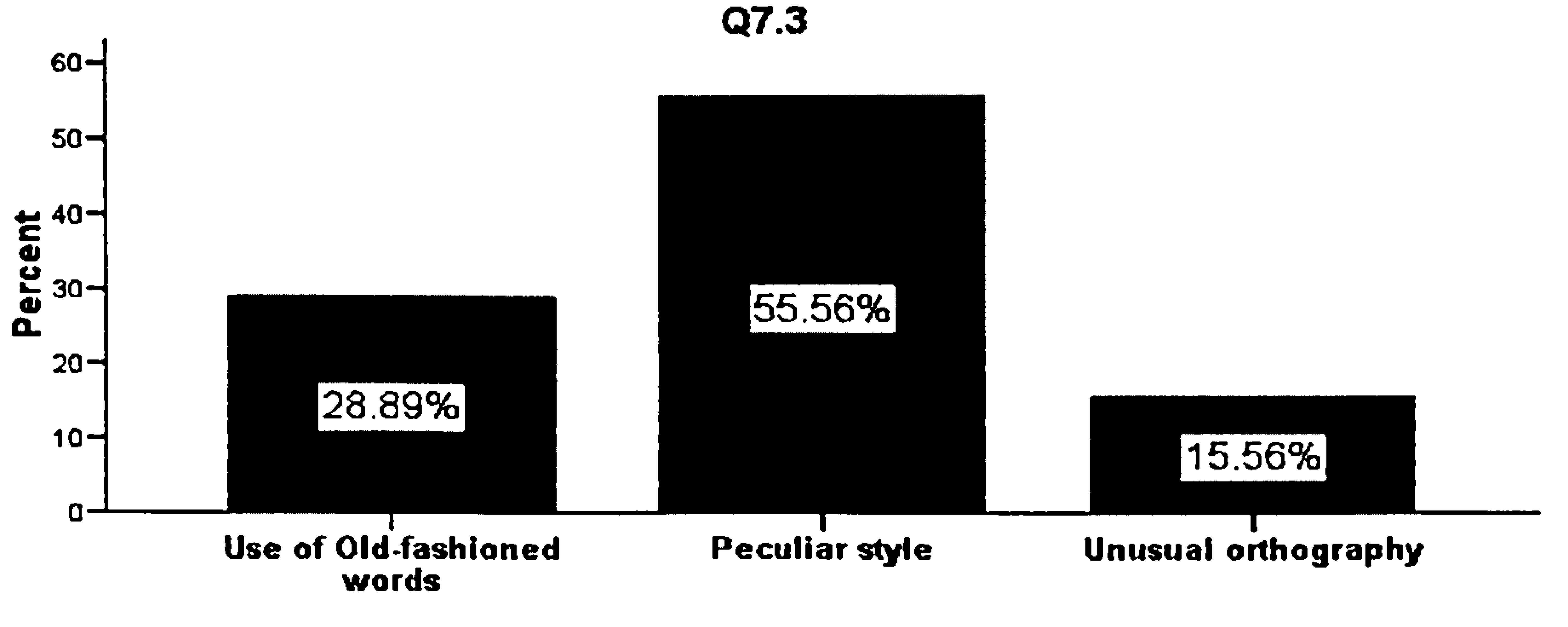


Table 6.23 shows that respondents identified three weaknesses which affect the comprehensibility of the aforementioned extract. 55.56% of them selected peculiar style and

28.89% use of old-fashioned words. 15.56% opted for unusual orthography and punctuation. Even some of the respondents who presumed they understood the text have noted that the text suffers from three weaknesses. The three drawbacks, in their opinion, are the same as those mentioned above.

Extract 8

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ (6) إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (7) الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (8) وَثَمُودَ
الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ (9) وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (10) الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ (11) فَأَكْثَرُوا
فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ (12) فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (13) إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ (14)

"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord did with Ad, Iram of the pillars, the like of which was never created in the land, and Thamood, who hollowed the rocks in the valley, and Pharaoh, he of the tent-pegs, who all were insolent in the land and worked much corruption therein? Thy Lord unloosed on them a scourge of chastisement; surely thy Lord is ever on the watch."

Arberry (89: 5-12)

In this passage, according to Muslim scholars, God addresses his speech to the Prophet Muhammad. He explains to the Prophet the way He destroyed and chastised three great and powerful peoples for their mischief. These three parables are narrated for three reasons. First, God wants to both admonish and warn tyrants and transgressors. If they do not stop doing wrong and do not believe in Him, He will then destroy and torment them in the same way He destroyed those before them. Second, God narrates very three ancient stories in order to prove the prophecy of Muhammad. Finally, God stresses that he is the All-Powerful (Qutub 2000 vol 8: 32-3 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 8: 390).

This research claims that the translation given above by Ali fails to transfer the original meaning clearly into the target language for three reasons. They are a cultural void, a cultural void which is also translated literally and peculiar style. Culturally, the verse contains three elements which are unfamiliar to the target reader as they do not have previous knowledge of them. They are Ad, Iram and Thamood. By Ad and Thamood, the Quran refers to two peoples who lived hundreds of years before Muhammad's life, while Iram is the name of a great city in the Arab peninsula which was built by the king of Ad to live in. He built this city in order to show that he has more

power than God (Abu Assu'ud 1990, vol 7: 10-11 and Tantawi 1999. 4497). As the translator does not tackle these three elements, the target reader will likely deem that they are names of people since the text has no explanatory information to clarify that. Literally, the translator renders the phrase *Iram dhat il 'imad* إرم ذات العماد literally into English as *Iram of the pillars* producing a senseless text. God identifies the city of Iram with Pillars because it was built with very giant pillars. The Arabic word *dhat* ذات has different functions. In this case it denotes possession and it relates to an ellipted noun reffereing to a city or land. Arberry renders the term *dhat* ذات literally into English without considering its genuine function in Arabic. God identifies the city of *Ad* with pillars without clarifying that it is a land or city; the word "land" is ellipted because the language is lofty and the term *dhat* implies the city. The exact meaning of this phrase then is *Iram the land of pillars.* Another literal translation in the verse is *and Pharaoh, he of the tent-pegs.* In this verse, God identifies Pharaoh with stakes because he used to torture people by tying them up with stakes until they died (ibid). The translator repeats the same mistake by ignoring the adjectival function of the term *dha* ذا which stands for a missing possession. Stylistically, the translation appears very difficult to the English reader. Ali renders the original style literally in terms of wording and the length of the sentence. Finally, as has been mentioned earlier, the use of old-fashioned words produces a tedious text. Once again, this affects the readability and attractiveness of the text. Before examining the comprehensibility of the previously mentioned extract, this research will render the verse in question in a more comprehensible way. The translation is as follows:

"Didn't you (Muhammad) see how your Lord dealt with the people of Ad, those who dwelt in Iram, the land of pillars, a city the like of which was never created in the land (Earth)? And also with the people of Thamood who hewed out rocks as dwellings in the valley? And with Pharaoh who used stakes for torture? All practised transgression in the land and therein worked much corruption. Hence, your Lord poured down on them different kinds of severe torment. Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful" (my translation according to Ibid).

The following table demonstrates the extent to which the translation was claimed to be comprehensible by the respondents.

Table 6.24

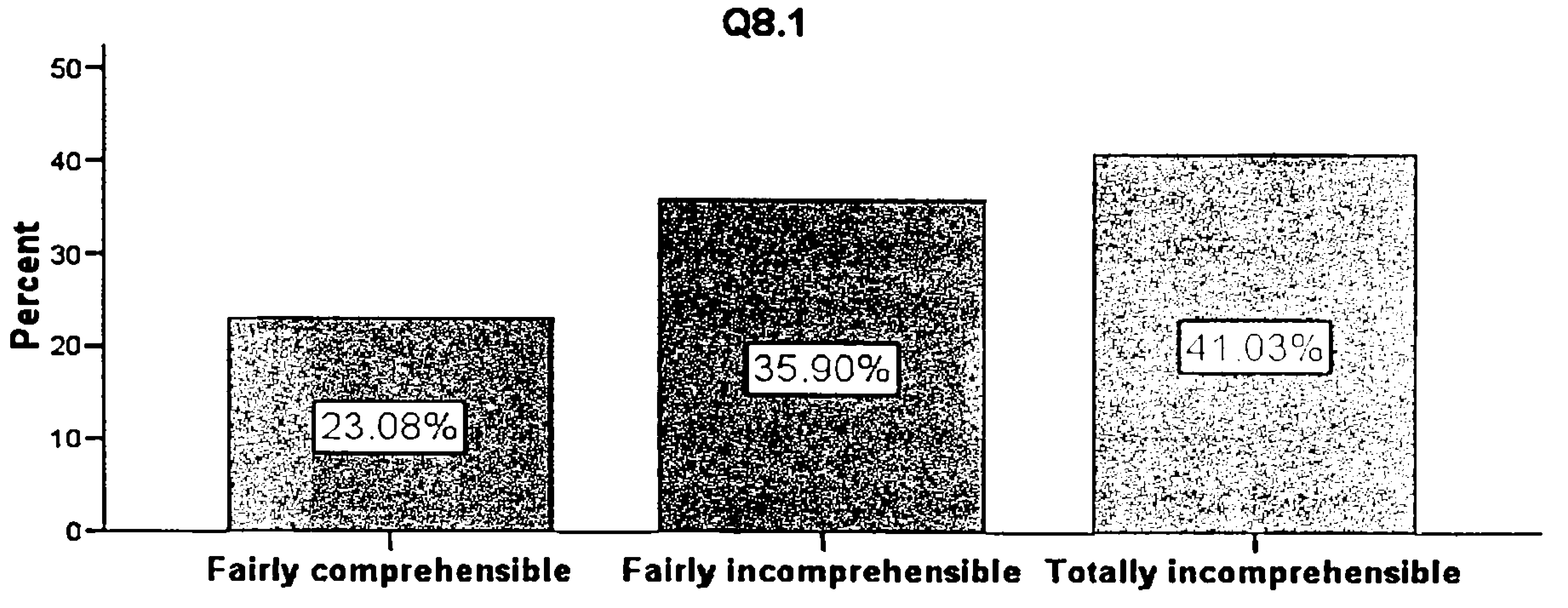
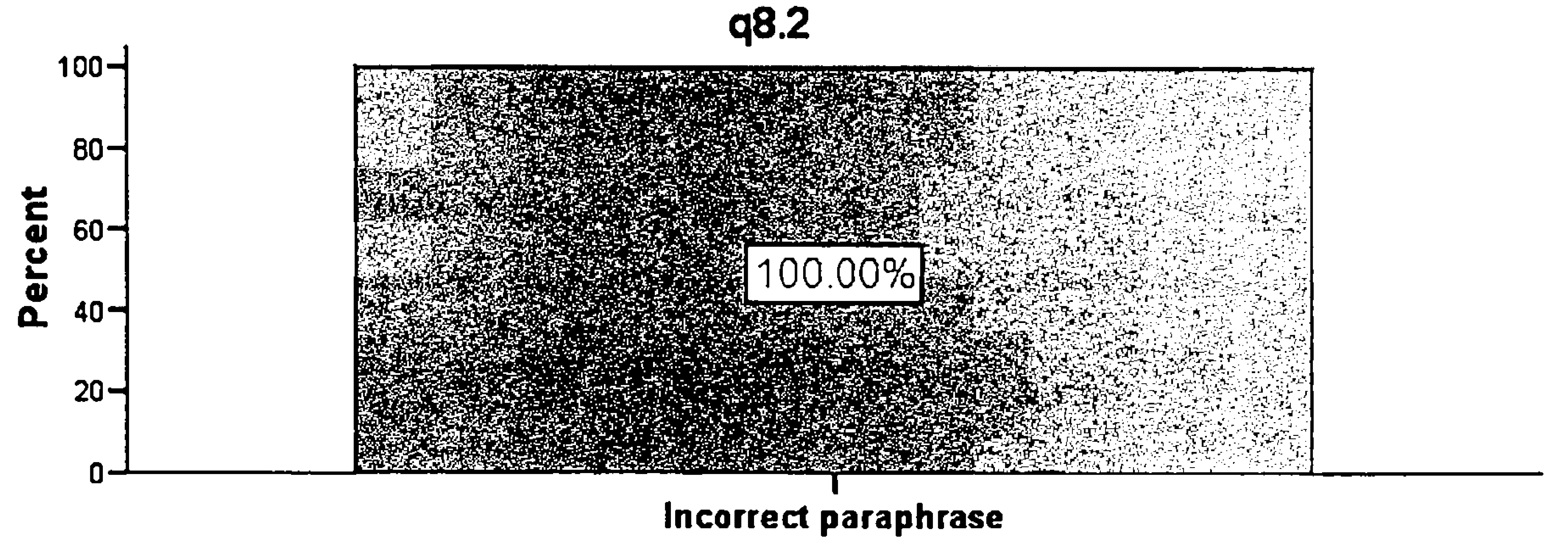


Table 6.24 indicates that 41.03% of the respondents stated that they did not understand the translation at all, while 35.90% estimated that the text was fairly incomprehensible. 23.08% said that it was fairly understandable, while none of the respondents claimed to comprehend the text completely. The paraphrase of those who assumed they understood the translation showed that they were all incorrect; none of them understood the correct meaning. Since the questionnaire tried not to be boring for respondents, it concentrated only on the cultural elements. It asked those respondents who opted for fairly comprehensible to explain what Ad and Thamood are. Some of them indicated that Ad and Thamood are two persons who were evil and who were consequently punished by God. Some guessed they were priests while others believed they were kings. Others understood that Thamood was a person who quarried a land. Although these respondents opted for fairly comprehensible, some of them noted that the meaning of the verse is unclear. They added that both *hollowed the rocks* and *tent-pegs* were meaningless. This indicates that Arberry's translation was incomprehensible to all respondents. Table 6.25 shows this.

Table 6.25



As this research attempts to establish the possible reasons for the incomprehensibility of the translations of the meaning of the Quran in question, it asked those respondents who opted for both fairly and completely incomprehensible to identify the reasons that prevented them from understanding the content. The reasons they gave are shown in table 6.26.

Table 6.26

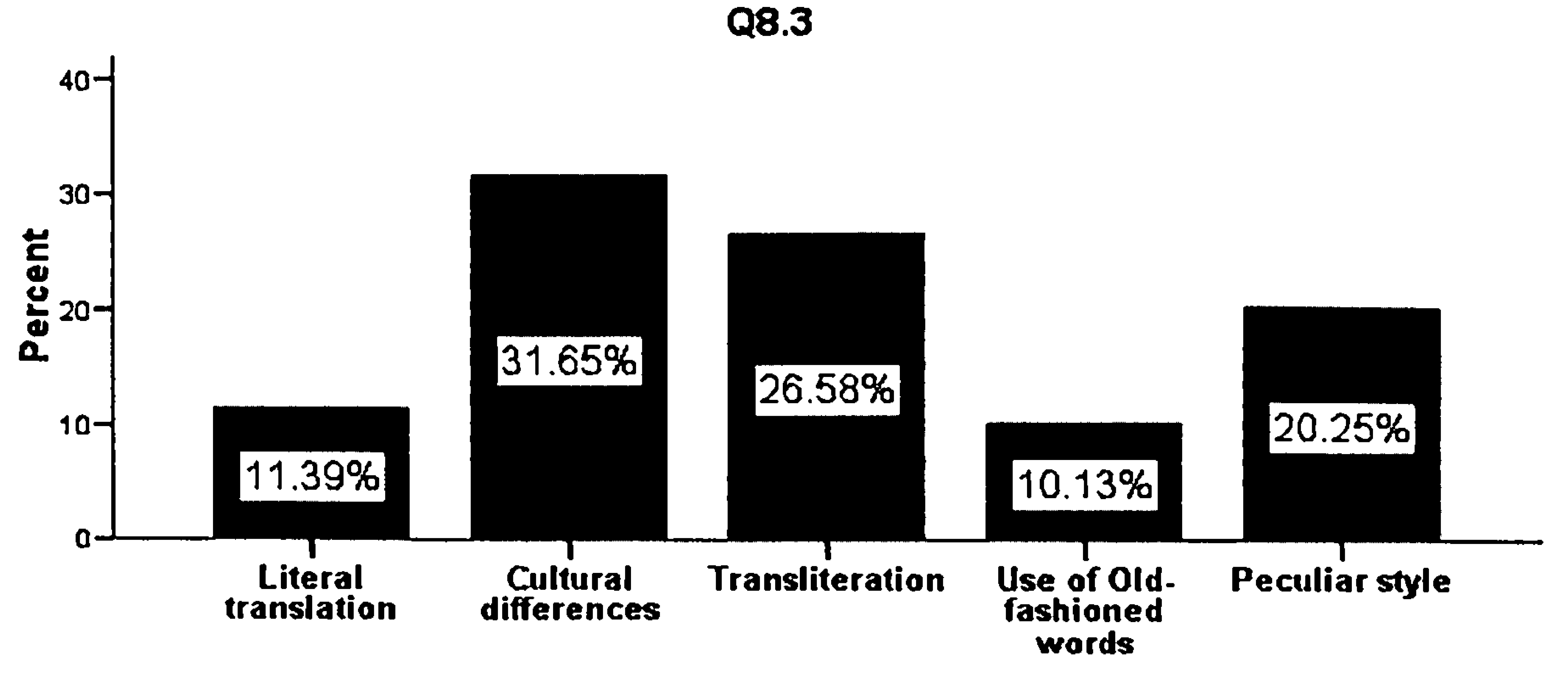


Table 6.26 demonstrates that cultural difference is claimed by respondents to be the main reason for incomprehensibility in that 31.65% opted for it. Transliteration is the second reason and was selected by 26.58%. They thought that *Ad, Iram* and *Thamood* are Arab concepts transliterated into English. 20.25% chose peculiar style as a third cause, while 11.39% selected literal translation. Finally, 10.13% picked out use of old-fashioned words.

Extract 9

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

God has not appointed cattle dedicated to idols, such as Bahira, Sa'iba, Wasila, Hami ; but the unbelievers forge against God falsehood, and most of them have no understanding."

Arberry (5: 103)

In the pre-Islamic era, pagan Arabs used to dedicate camels and she-camels to their idols on different occasions. These animals were called *Bahirah, Sa'ibah, Wasilah* and *Hamin*. Bahirah بَحِيرَةٍ was a she-camel who had given birth five times and the last delivery being male. The pagan Arabs used to slit its ears and let it loose for free pasture. Sa'ibah سَائِبَة was also a she-camel let loose for free pasture and water. Before starting a long journey, or if someone was ill, the pagan Arabs used to vow to consecrate a she-camel to their idols if they returned from the journey safely, or if the sick person recovered. Wasilah وَصِيلَة was a she-camel who had given birth to male and female twins. If a she-camel had given birth to a male, the pagan Arabs used to dedicate it to their idols, while if it had been delivered of a female, the new born female was kept for them. If the she-camel had been delivered of male and female twins then they used to let it loose for the sake of the idols. Hamin حَام is a stallion camel freed from work for the sake of the idols. If a camel had impregnated ten she-camels, the pagan Arabs used to call it a stallion camel and used to let it loose. The milk of these three types of she-camels was spared for the sake of the idols of the pagan Arabs. No one was allowed to milk them or carry anything on them. They were not restrained from any pasture or water. The pagan Arabs claimed that these practices were imposed by God. Therefore, God revealed this verse in order to disprove what they had invented against Him (Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 302 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 208)

In his translation of the verse shown above, Arberry transliterates four key culture-specific Arab terms in the verse. This produces a meaningless text because transliteration does not help to render any clear meaning. *Bahirah, Sa'ibah, Wasilah, Hamin* were types of camels consecrated to idols by the pagan Arabs before Islam. When Islam came, it terminated these practices. These beliefs were only practiced in a very ancient era. Recent readers, including most Arabs, might not be aware of them. So, Arberry's technique of transliterating cultural-specific elements fails to

render a comprehensible text. Table 5.27 shows the degree of comprehensibility of this translation as assessed by respondents. Before looking at the degree of intelligibility, this research will suggest a translation. It will try to transfer the cultural elements in a clearer way. However, understanding of the verse will be lacking because these cultural elements cannot be explained clearly in the body of the translation. They cannot be explained in single words or short clauses. They need to be expressed in a separate paragraph. Therefore, in order to produce a clear meaning, these features should be footnoted with more explanatory information. The proposed translation is as follows:

"God has not prescribed superstitions such as a slitting the ear of a she-camel, or a letting loose she-camel for free pasture, or sacrificing twin animals to idols, or freeing a stallion-camel from work. Those who do not believe invent lies against God and most of them lack wisdom" (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 302 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 208).

Table 6.27

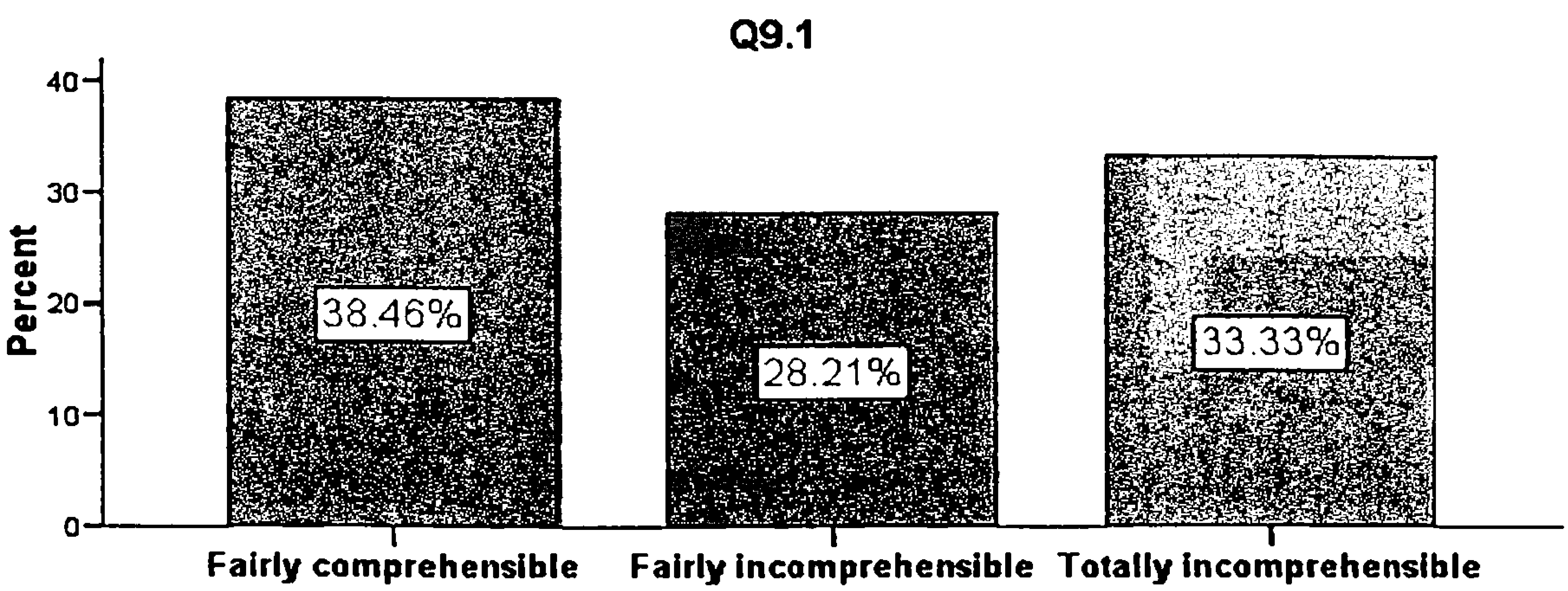
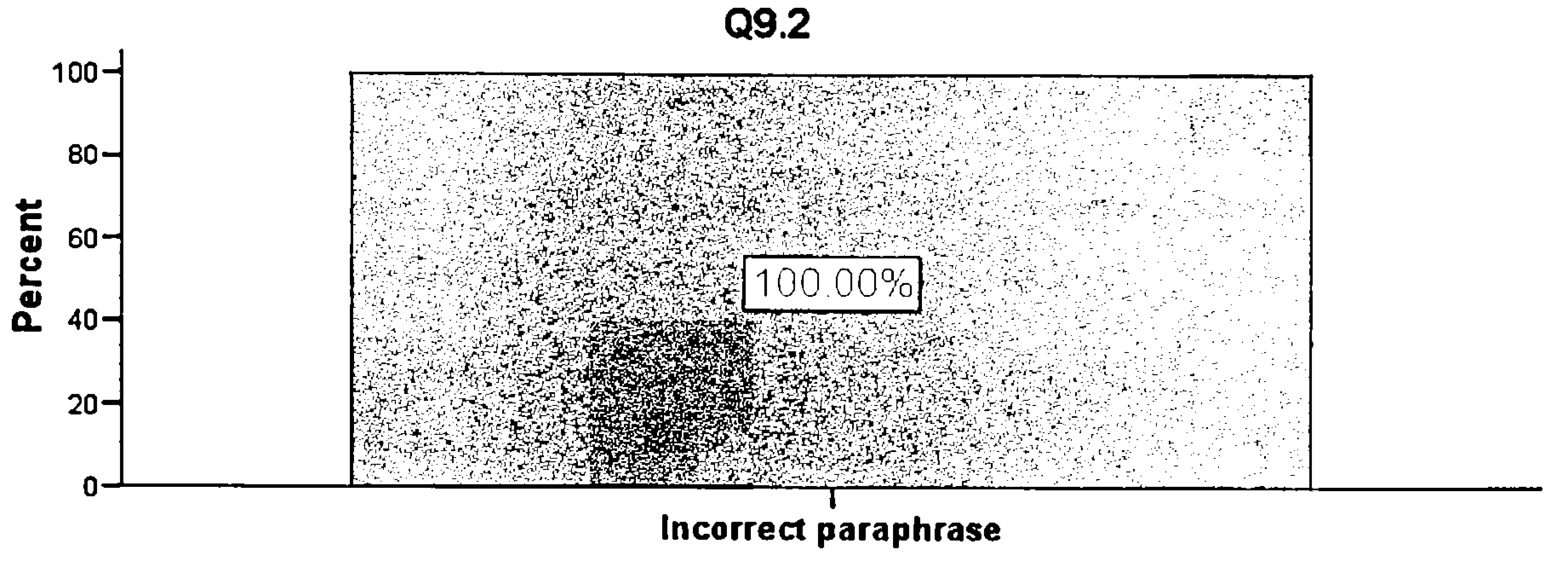


Table 6.27 indicates that 38.46% of the respondents deemed the meaning of Arberry's translation was fairly comprehensible. 28.21% stated the content was fairly incomprehensible, while 33.33% asserted that they did not understand the meaning at all. Although the questionnaire asked those who selected either completely or fairly comprehensible to paraphrase the given text, none of them reworded the extract. Therefore, their answers were considered incorrect, meaning that Arberry's translation is in fact incomprehensible to all respondents. Table 6.28 shows this.

Table 6.28



As the translation was incomprehensible, those respondents who selected either fairly or completely incomprehensible were asked to state the reasons that prevented their understanding of the extract. These possible reasons are shown in table 6.29.

Table 6.29

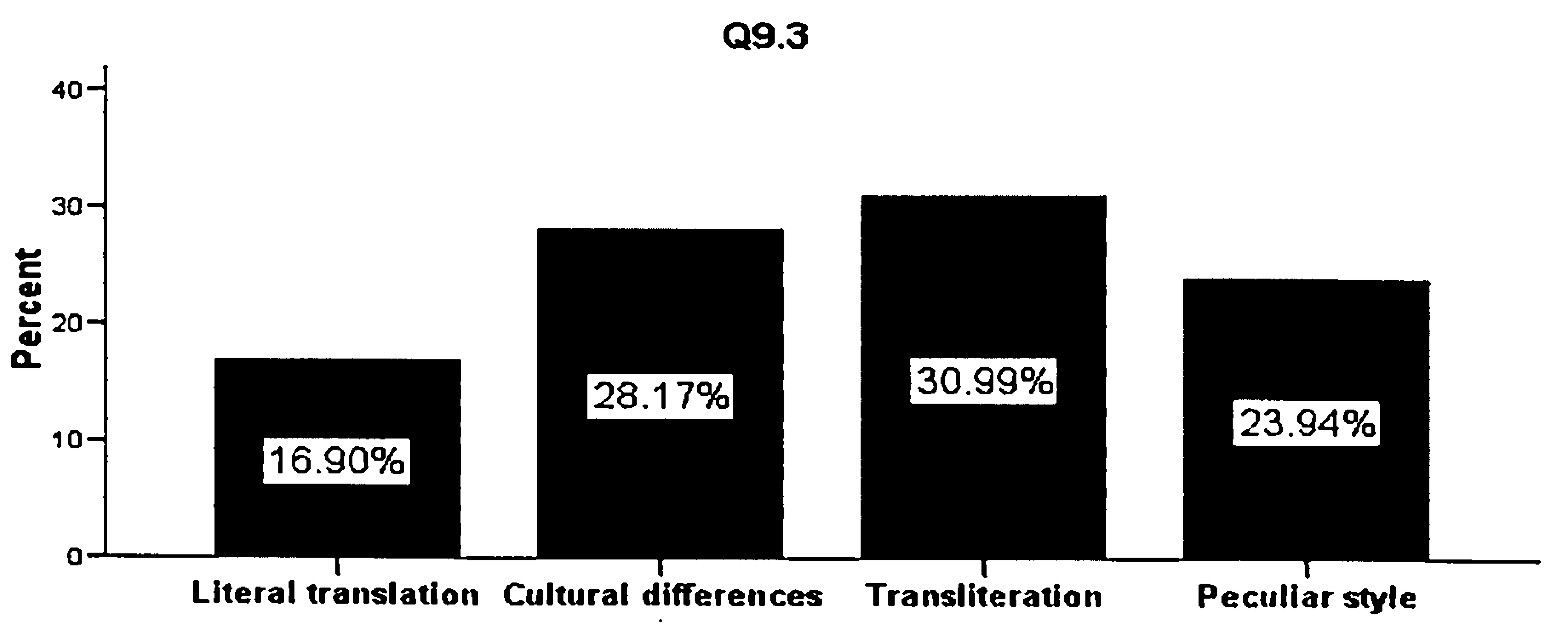


Table 6.29 establishes that 30.99% of the respondents thought that transliteration was the main reason that affected the clarity of the meaning. 28.17% selected cultural difference while 23.94% opted for peculiar style. 16.90% chose literal translation. Regarding literal translation, Arberry's rendering does not suffer from this weakness. Some respondents might have selected it because the text was incomprehensible so they could not identify the actual reasons. Generally speaking, respondents were, to some extent, able to accurately identify reasons for incomprehensibility.

Extract 10

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ فَتَيَاتِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

*"Any one of you who has not the affluence to be able to marry **believing freewomen** in wedlock, let him take **believing handmaids** that your **right hand** own; God knows very well your faith; the one of you is as the other".*

Arberry (4: 29)

In translating the above verse, Arberry fails to transfer comprehensible content into the target language. This is because, as often, he both translates the original text literally and does not tackle the cultural elements. The cultural components are *believing freewomen* and *believing handmaids*, which are also transferred as old-fashioned words. The literally rendered element which is also culture-specific is *your right hand own*. These culturally foreign and literally rendered features are meaningless to non-Muslim readers. In the pre-Islamic era, slavery was common practice. The pagan Arabs and other nations used to buy male servants for carrying out hard jobs, while female servants were used domestically and for sexual enjoyment. Marrying these servants was socially unacceptable. Those who were traded were called slaves while non-slaves were called free whether they were males or females. So, *believing freewoman* stands for the woman who was not a slave and who embraced Islam, while *believing handmaid* stands for a female servant who had converted to the same religion.

As a message of equity and respect, when Islam came, it imposed procedures to stop this cruel phenomenon piecemeal and also instructed Muslims to stop calling this section of the community slaves. Islam then called them respectfully *Mulk Al-yamin* ملك اليمين which literally means owned by the right hand. Connotatively, this means that they are a trust and they should be treated in a humane manner. In order to terminate slavery, God instructed Muslims to get married to slaves (Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 208).

Arberry's literal translation of cultural terms along with the use of old-fashioned words fails then to transfer the content clearly. Moreover, the translator mistranslates a key term which is *famin* فمن resulting in vagueness. Linguistically, *famin* is an answer to the conditional phrase *waman*

ومن implying an ellipted verb mentioned earlier. It is used in this case in order to avoid repetition as the Quranic language is lofty. The implied verb is *yanki<u>h</u>a* ينكح. This verse instructs Muslims that if they do not have enough money to get married to free women then they can get married to female slaves (ibid).

So, the word *famin* means get married. Arberry renders the clause *famin ma malakat aymanikum* into English as *take believing handmaids that your right hand own*. The word *take* does not transfer the genuine meaning but results in vagueness. To sum up, the translation above suffers from three weaknesses which affect its readability and comprehensibility. These weaknesses are: literal translation, cultural differences and use of old-fashioned words. These weaknesses also result in a peculiar style. Table 5.30 shows to what extent Arberry's translation was comprehensible to respondents.

Table 6.30

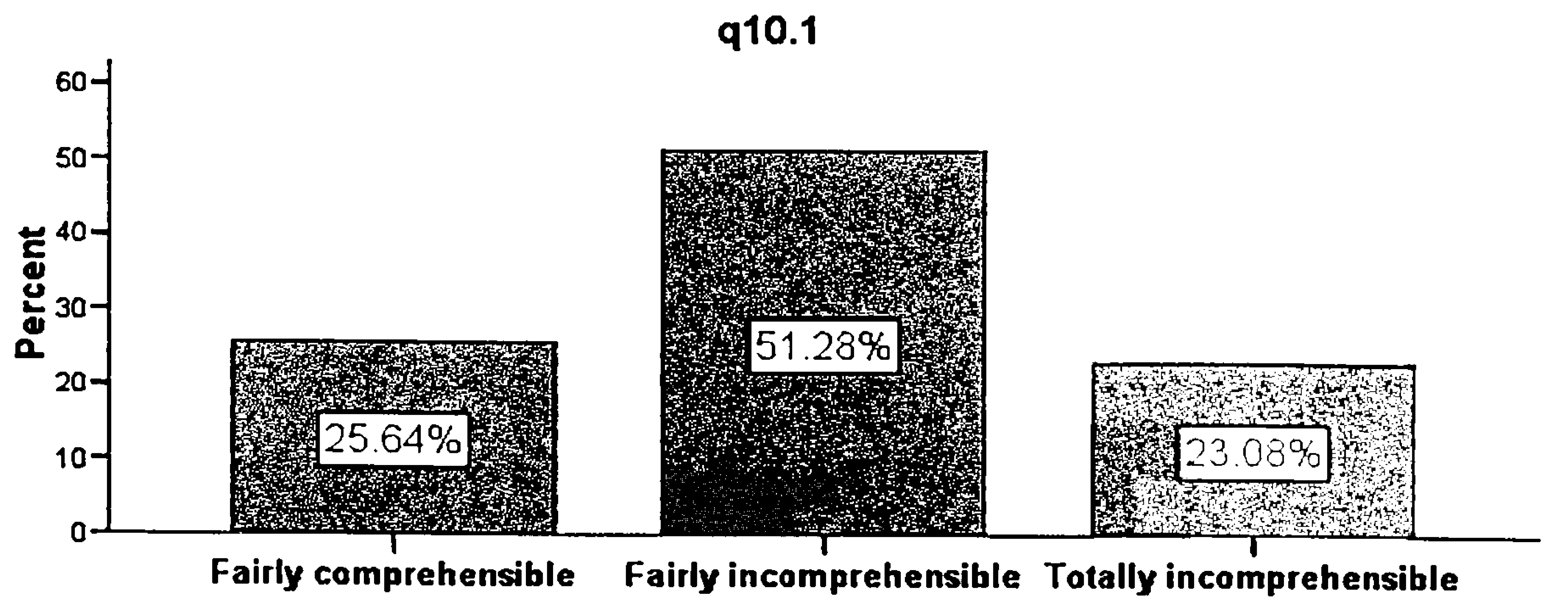
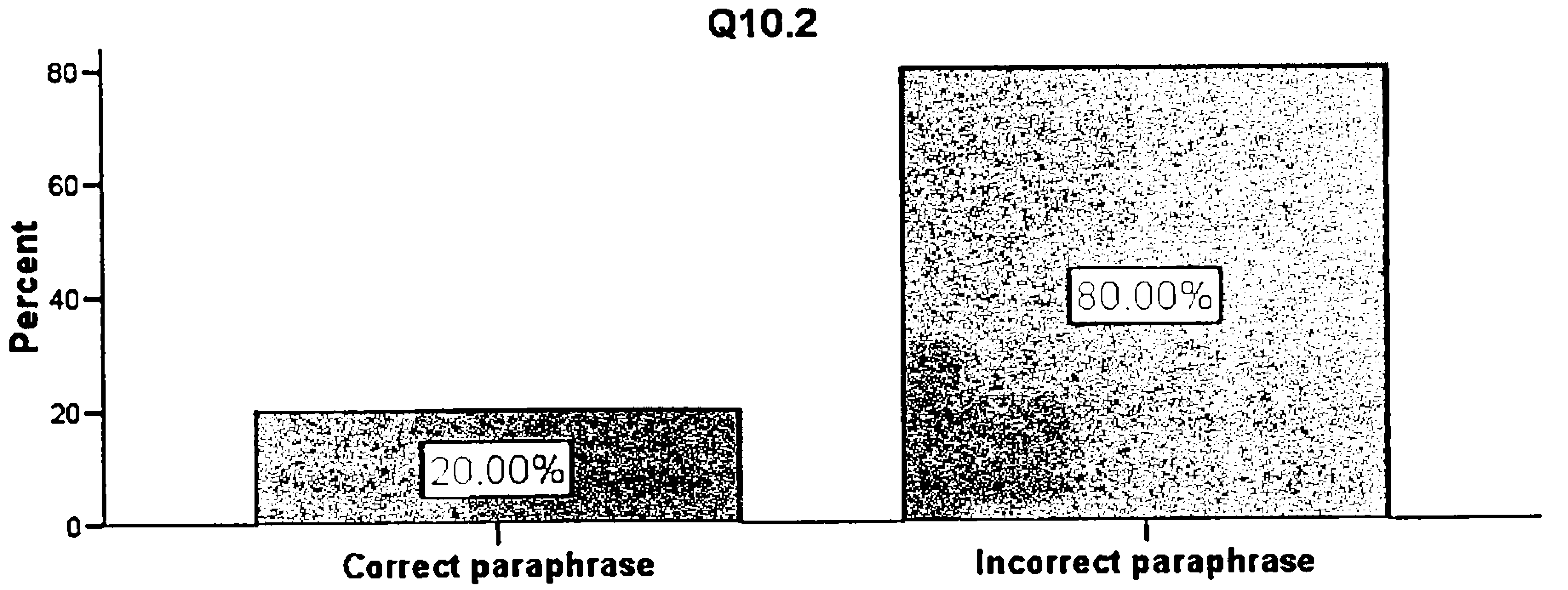


Table 6.30 reveals that 51.28% of the respondents claimed that the text is fairly incomprehensible, 23.08% asserted that the extract is totally incomprehensible, while 25.64% believed the translation is fairly comprehensible. Those who opted for fairly comprehensible were asked to paraphrase the text. Only 20% were, to some extent, correct in their answers, while 80% were incorrect. This means that the translation was clear merely to 5.12% of the respondents, i.e. two respondents. They understood the meaning because one of them had spent a few years in the Arab world. He studied Arabic and has a good knowledge of the Quran. The other respondent also has a good knowledge of the Quran and Islam as she is very interested in

Middle Eastern studies. Table 6.31 illustrates this.

Table 6.31



The results of the questionnaire show that the translation discussed above is incomprehensible to 94.88% of the respondents. In order to find out the reasons that impeded intelligibility, those respondents who selected either fairly or completely incomprehensible were asked to state these reasons. These possible causes are shown in the following table.

Table 6.32

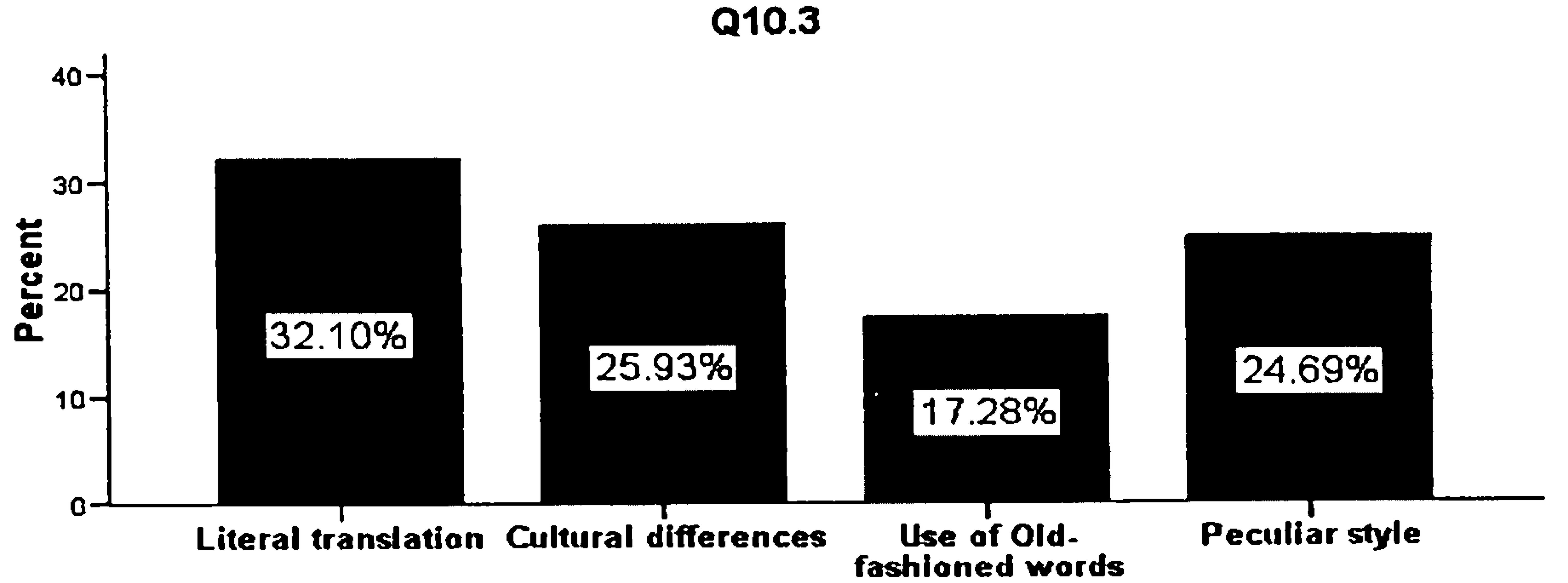


Table 6.32 indicates that 32.10% of the respondents selected literal translation, and 25.93% cultural difference. 24.69% chose peculiar style and 17.26% use of old-fashioned words. These results support the hypothesis of this research.

Extract 11

وَهَٰذَا كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

"*This is a* ***book*** *We have sent down, blessed and confirming that which was before it, and for thee to warn the* ***Mother of Cities*** *and those about* ***her****; and those who believe in the world to come believe in it, and watch over their prayers.*

Arberry (6: 92)

This verse is divided into two sections. In the first part, God addresses his speech to people in general and in the second part He addresses his speech to Muhammad. First, God assures the Prophet that He revealed the Quran for the happiness of human beings as it contains wisdom and guidance. It was also revealed to confirm the scriptures before It. In the second section, God tells Muhammad that He revealed the Quran to him in order to warn the people of Mecca and all the nations around it. His message is universal and was not revealed for a particular people or time. Then God adds that whoever believes in Doomsday, will believe in the Quran and they will perform their prayers carefully (Abu Assu'ud 2000 vol 2: 402 & Qutub 2000 vol 3: 97).

Once again, Arberry fails to render the meaning of the verse shown above clearly. This is because, as often, he translates literally and does not tackle the cultural elements mentioned. There are two cultural elements which are translated literally in this verse. They are *the Book* and *Mother of Cit*ies. The Quran has a number of names. "The Book" is one of them. Culturally, this is well known to Muslims but not to others. As Arberry translates this cultural term literally, a non-Muslim reader will not understand that *the Book* refers to the Quran unless it is clarified in the text. Arberry also translates *Umm Al-qura* أم القرى literally as *Mother of Cities.* God calls Mecca *Umm Al-qura* because of its great importance. In Arabic, *Umm* can be used as an element before nouns to confirm superiority. For instance, Saddam Hussein called the Gulf War in 1991 *Umm Al-ma'arik* ام المعارك (mother of the wars) because of its importance as it defined the future of Iraq. So, God uses the term *Umm Al-qura* to stress the importance and sacredness of Mecca. This does not necessarily have the same effect in other languages. Literal translation then fails to transfer the same meaning. Hence, *Mother of Cities* does not mean anything to non-Arab readers. They might think that it refers to a woman especially because Arberry uses the pronoun *her* to

refer to it.

Another factor that affects comprehensibility is the pronoun *thee*. This pronoun refers to the Prophet Muhammad but because Arberry does not elucidate to whom it refers, it produces vagueness in the text. Moreover, Arberry's translation is not punctuated properly. This makes the text more difficult to read. Arberry uses a semi-colon after *those about her* and continues with the word *and.* In the verse, the word *and* denotes the start of a new sentence in the original text but Arberry transfers it literally into English so it confuses the English reader. According to Arberry's translation, those who believe in the world to come and perform their prayers are warned as well. He should replace the semi colon with a full stop and start a new sentence without using *and.* Before looking at the degree of intelligibility of Arberry's translation claimed by respondents, this research will suggest the following translation.

"This Quran is a blessed Book which We have sent it down confirming the revelations (Bible and Torah) which came before it, so you (Muhammad) may warn the people of Mecca and all those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it (the Quran), and they are constant in keeping their prayers". (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 402 & Qutub 2000 vol 3: 97).

The following table shows to what extent the translation shown above is comprehensible.

Table 6.33

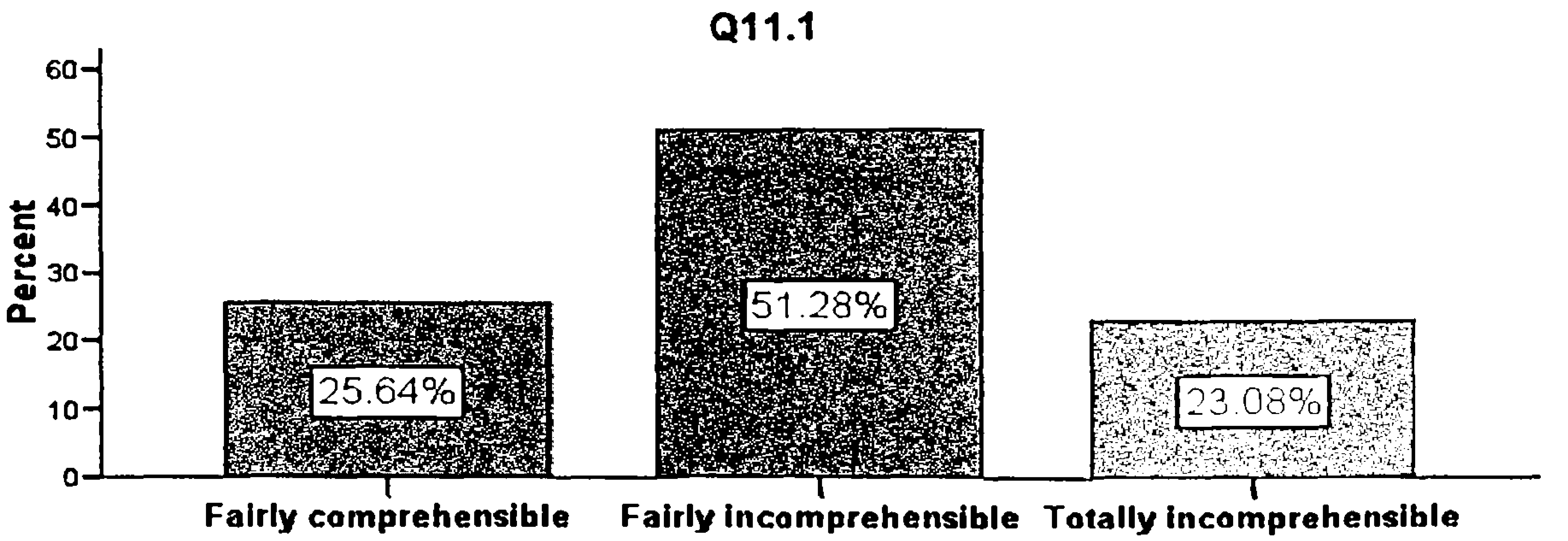
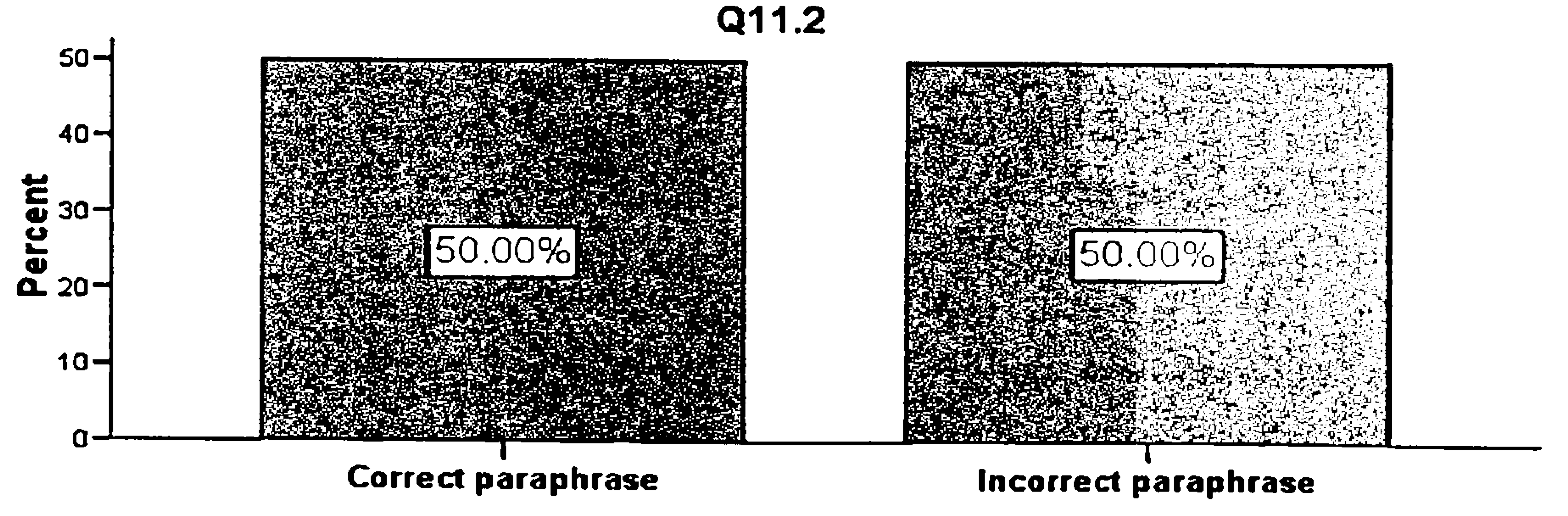


Table 6.33 demonstrates that 51.28% of the respondents claimed that the text was fairly incomprehensible. 23.08% believed that the extract was completely incomprehensible, while 25.64% thought that the extract was fairly comprehensible. The table also indicates that none of the respondents comprehended the text completely. In order to test the accuracy of their answers, those 25.65% of respondents who opted for fairly comprehensible were asked to explain what *the Mother of cities* means. Only two were sure about the correct answer while four respondents presumed that it is Mecca. Their answers were either "I guess Mecca" or "Mecca" followed by question mark. Their answers were considered correct though they were not sure. They constitute 50% of those who selected fairly comprehensible, while the other 50% were incorrect. This indicates that only 12.82% of the respondents comprehended, or could guess, the meaning of the translation discussed above. Table 6.34 demonstrates this.

Table 6.34



The results of the questionnaire then revealed that the translation discussed above by Arberry is incomprehensible to 87.18% of the respondents. The following table shows the reasons that hindered comprehensibility as claimed by the respondents.

Table 6.35

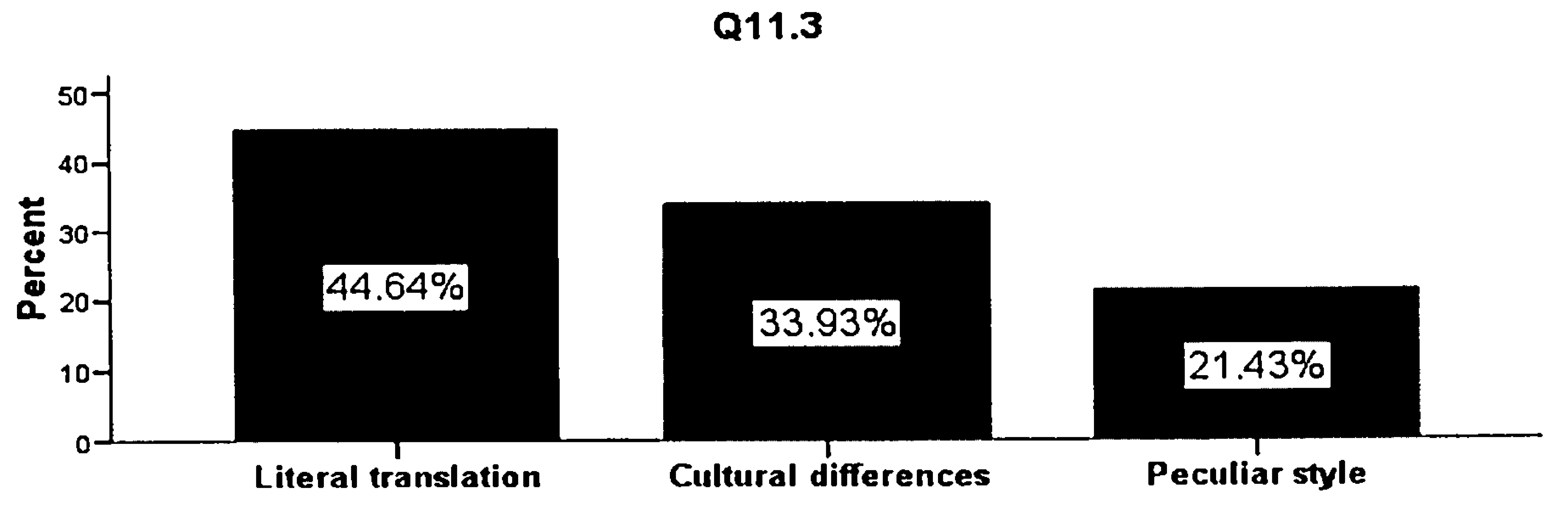


Table 6.35 points out that 44.64% of the respondents chose literal translation as the main reason for incomprehensibility, 33.93% selected cultural difference and 21.43% peculiar style.

Extract 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنْكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّاعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

"O Messenger. Let not those grieve thee, who race each other into unbelief: (whether it be) among those who say "We believe" with their lips but whose hearts have no faith; or it be among Jews,-men who will listen to any lie,- will listen even to others who have never so much as come to thee. They change the words from their (right) times and places: they say, "If ye are given this, take it, but if not, beware!" If any one's trial is intended by Allah, thou hast no authority in the least for him against Allah. For such - it is not Allah.s will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a heavy punishment."

Ali (5: 41)

In translating the verse shown above, Ali renders the original style literally into English. This affects the readability and consequently it affects the ease of understanding the content. Ali transfers the sequence of phrases and sentences of the original text intact into English. He does not try to readjust and manipulate these phrases and sentences so they are natural in the target language. The preservation of the structural form of the original text results in a highly awkward

style in English. This affects word order, coherence, cohesion, sentence length, reference and punctuation. These elements make the readability of the target text very difficult and hence the meaning is unintelligible.

The alien word order results in confusion for the reader. Loss of coherence and cohesion does not help the reader to link words and expressions to other words and expressions. The original verse consists of one long sentence, whose various clauses are arranged in a logically hierarchical fashion, that is, a number of dependent clauses connected to independent clauses. These clauses are linked by specific relatives and references. The writing systems of Arabic and English are different, and Ali replaces relatives and references with odd punctuation in English. This also poses a real problem in following and understanding the text because the target reader will not know where the sentence starts and where it ends.

Every language has its own style which differs from that of other languages, and if the style is alien, readability will be reduced; hence, in order to produce a comprehensible text, Ali should have rendered the meaning of the original text in a style natural to English. Let us look at the following suggested translation of the same verse, which attempts to employ a natural English style.

"O Messenger"! Don't let those who hurry fall into disbelief cause you to be sad. They include those who say "We believe" with their mouths but their hearts do not believe. Amongst Jews are men who listen much to lies. They listen to others who have not come to you; those who distort the words (Torah) after they are revealed down. They say, "If you are given what you desire, take it, but if not, leave it. Whomsoever God desires to lead astray, you (Muhammad) can do nothing for him against God. Those whose hearts God does not want to purify, for them there is a disgrace in this world, and a great torment in the hereafter. (my translation according to Abu Asu'ud 1990 vol 2: 238-240 & Qutub 2000 vol 2: 364-373).

Although the suggested translation is rendered in an improved style, a complete understanding of this verse can't be achieved until the reason for revelation is footnoted. This verse talks about a specific occasion when a noble married Jewish man committed adultery at the time of the Prophet Muhammed. According to the Torah, both the man and woman should have been stoned to death. As the adulterer was noble, wealthy Jews rejected this punishment, while poor ones insisted that

they should be stoned to death. Since they disagreed amongst themselves about the punishment of these adulterers, their community leaders decided to send some Jews to the Prophet Muhammad to obtain a verdict. The leaders advised the representatives that if Muhammad's verdict was lashing then accept it but if it was stoning, then leave it. Muhammad asked the representatives about the Jewish sentence for this crime. They replied that according to the Torah, adulterers should be whipped. Muhammad then asked them to bring the Torah. When they brought it and read the verses in question, the punishment due was stoning to death. It was the same according to Islam. Muhammad was grieved because the Jews tried to change what the Torah contains. So this verse was revealed to calm the prophet down (ibid).

This verse cannot be comprehended without explaining the story discussed above. This is to say, in the case of verses which were revealed for specific reasons; reasons of revelation must be footnoted for two reasons. First, the translator cannot explain the story in the body of the translation because the text will be very long, and if the translator adds some information in the translation, his opinion might interfere with the transliteration itself. Second, the meaning of the verse cannot be clear without additional explanation.

Let us now examine to what extent Ali's translation of the verse mentioned above was comprehensible to respondents. This is explained in table 6.36

Table 6.36

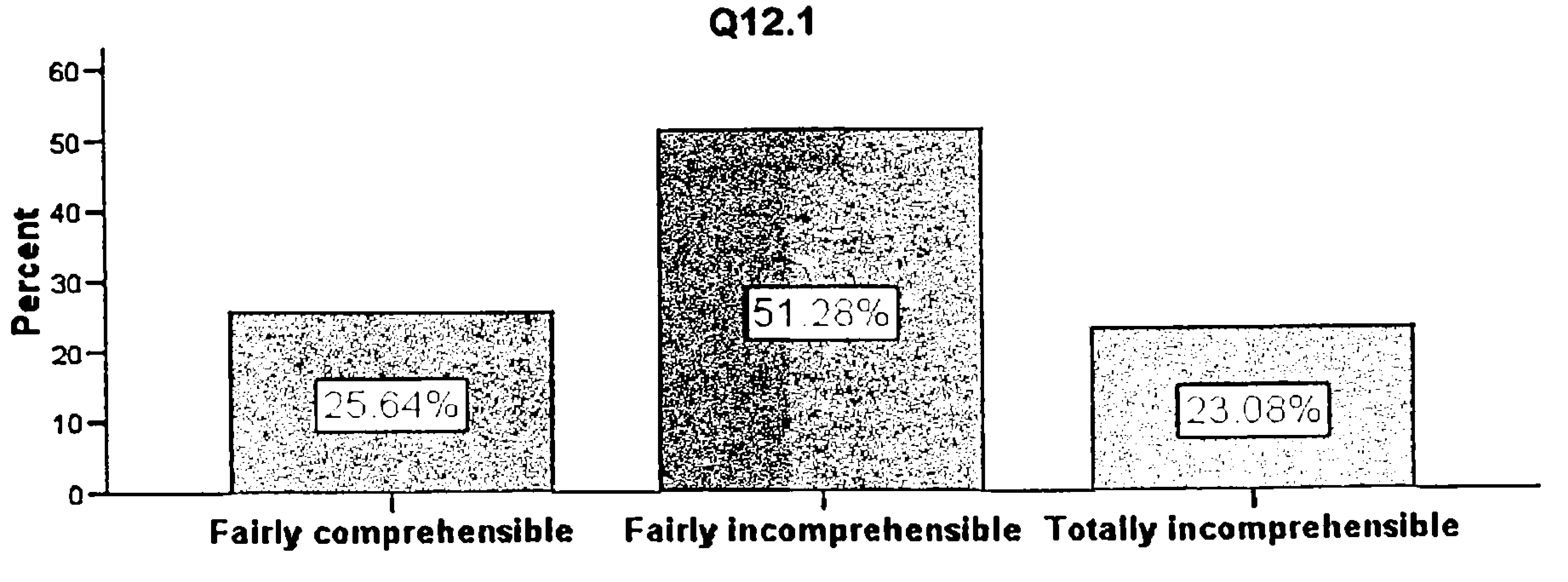


Table 6.36 indicates that 51.28% of the respondents believed that the extract was fairly incomprehensible, 23.08% thought it was totally incomprehensible and 25.64% presumed that the

meaning was fairly comprehensible. None of the respondents opted for completely comprehensible.

This research did not ask respondents to paraphrase the extract discussed above because the text is long and paraphrasing it would be tedious for respondents. However, some of those who thought the text was fairly comprehensible paraphrased the text briefly. Their summary indicated that they did not understand the translation. This means that not everybody who thought they understood the translation fairly well was correct in this belief. Those respondents who selected either fairly or completely comprehensible suggested five reasons which hindered comprehensibility. These reasons are shown in table 6.37.

Table 6.37

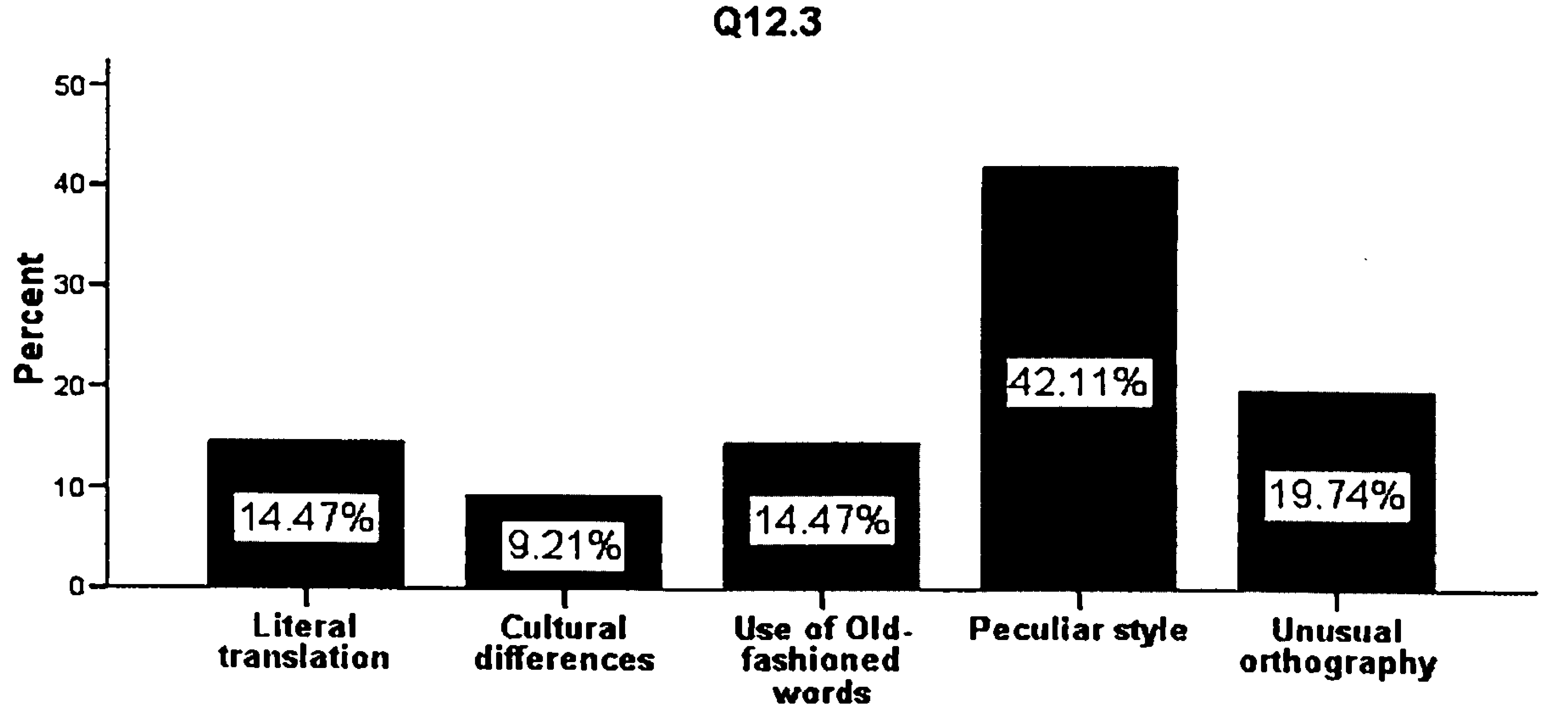


Table 6.37 indicates that peculiar style is the key reason for incomprehensibility as 42.11% of the respondents selected it. Unusual orthography was chosen by 19.74% as the second main reason. Literal translation and use of old-fashioned words were chosen by the same proportion of respondents 14.47% each. Finally, 9.21% opted for cultural difference.

Extract 13

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ

"Verily, Allah is not ashamed to set forth a parable even of a mosquito or so much more when it is bigger (or less when it is smaller) than it. And for those who believe, they know that it is the Truth from their Lord, but as those who disbelieve, they say: "What did Allah intended [sic] *by this parable?" By it He misleads many, and many He guides thereby. And He misleads thereby only those who are Al-Fasiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah).*

Al-Hilali & Khan (2: 26)

This verse was revealed after God revealed the following verse يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوِ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ "O mankind! A parable is set forth, therefore listen to it. Surely those idols whom you worship besides Allah cannot create even a fly, though they gather together for the sake of creating it, and should the fly snatch away anything from them, they could not take it back. Weak are the pursuer (the idols) and the pursued (the fly)" (22: 73) (my translation according to the interpretation of Al-Nasfi (1999 vol 2: 370) and Al-Razi (2000 vol 11: 153)). When this verse was revealed, the Jews ridiculed and poked fun at Muhammad, the Quran and the God of Muhammad by saying; what god is this who talks about flies!? Why doesn't he talk about important things?! Then God sent down this verse to stress that He is not ashamed to give an example of anything even if it is a mosquito or even what is on it (Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 1: 90-5).

Al-Hilali and Khan fail to transfer the content of the verse shown above clearly into the target language for two reasons. First, the meaning of the original text is rendered in unnatural style in English. Again, as was discussed in extract 12, the verse in Arabic is composed of one long sentence. Phrases and clauses are linked in a coherent and cohesive structure. Al-Hilali and Khan transfer the meaning into English in a long sentence. They keep the same sequence of phrases and clauses unbroken as in the original. This produces unusual orthography and punctuation. It also affects the word order. Hence, the reader will not be able to link certain phrases and clauses to others. Second, once again, this verse was revealed in response to a specific occasion. A better

understanding of it can only be achieved by understanding some details of that event. In order to accomplish this, the reason for the revelation has to be footnoted. Unfortunately, Al-Hilali and Khan do not do this. Moreover, according to some Muslim scholars, the verse above includes a scientific miracle (e.g. Zaghlul 2004). This miracle concerning what is on the mosquito was only discovered recently. This miracle is missing in the translation. This is because Al-Hilali and Khan's translation is relatively old and because they depend on an old interpretation when translating the meaning of the Quran. This suggests that the translation of the meaning of the Quran should be updated every few years in order to explain any new scientific discovery mentioned in the Quran which was not known to the old Muslim interpreters.

Zaghlul (2004) ascertains that although God gives a very undersized creature as a parable, recent science proved that this insect is an extremely sophisticated creature. At that time, because science was very poor, a mosquito appeared an insignificant creature to everybody. Recent science has discovered that this little creature is a very sophisticated insect and has some amazing features. These features are: 1) it is male and female (unisex); 2) it has a hundred eyes in its head; 3) it also has 48 teeth in its mouth; 4) it has three hearts; 5) it has a proboscis (needle) which has six knives in it, every one of which has a specific job; 6) it has three wings on each side of its body; 7) its body contains an ultra violet X-ray system which helps it to distinguish human skin in the dark; 8) before it inserts its proboscis into human skin, it anaesthetizes it. A human feels the bite only when the mosquito pulls out its proboscis; 9) its proboscis contains a system which helps it to analyze blood. It absorbs some blood contents but rejects others; 10) it has a system that enables it to thin blood in order to pass it through its very narrow proboscis; 11) the most amazing fact is that another insect lives on its back. This creature can only be seen under a microscope[1]. Thus, according to Zaghlul, recent science proves that God does not give an insignificant creature as an example, particularly when God talks about what is on it.

Before this research considers to what extent the translation above was comprehensible to respondents, it will first suggest the following translation.

[1] www.files.wordpass.com

"God is not ashamed to give a mosquito and what is on it as a parable. As for those who believe, they know that it is the Wisdom from their Lord, but those who disbelieve say: "what does God intend by giving this parable?" By this parable God leads many astray, and He guides many. God leads astray thereby only those who are disbelievers (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 1: 90-5 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 1: 206).

Table 6.38

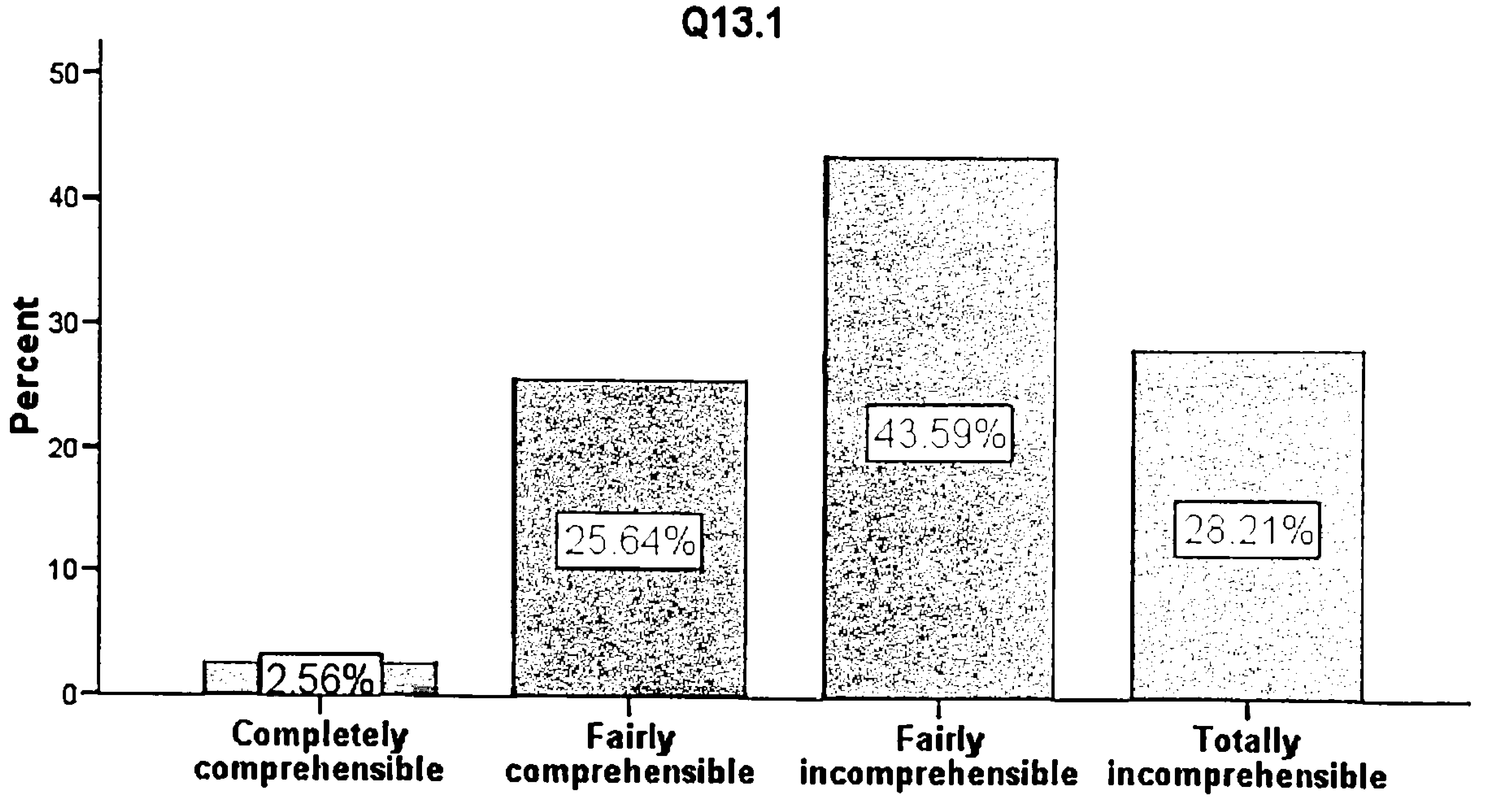


Table 6.38 demonstrates that 43.59% of the respondents indicated that the meaning was fairly unclear. 28.21% asserted that it was totally incomprehensible, 25.64% that it was fairly comprehensible, while 2.56% believed that they comprehended the translation totally. Since this example is fairly long, this research did not ask respondents to paraphrase the translation. Therefore, it is not clear whether the answers of those who opted for either completely or fairly comprehensive were correct. However, even if we presume that those respondents comprehended the translation, then it is worth mentioning that they constitute only 28.20% of the total number of respondents. This is an unsatisfactory result because the translated text should be as clear as the original. Let us now look at the reasons for incomprehensibility as rated by the respondents.

Table 6.39

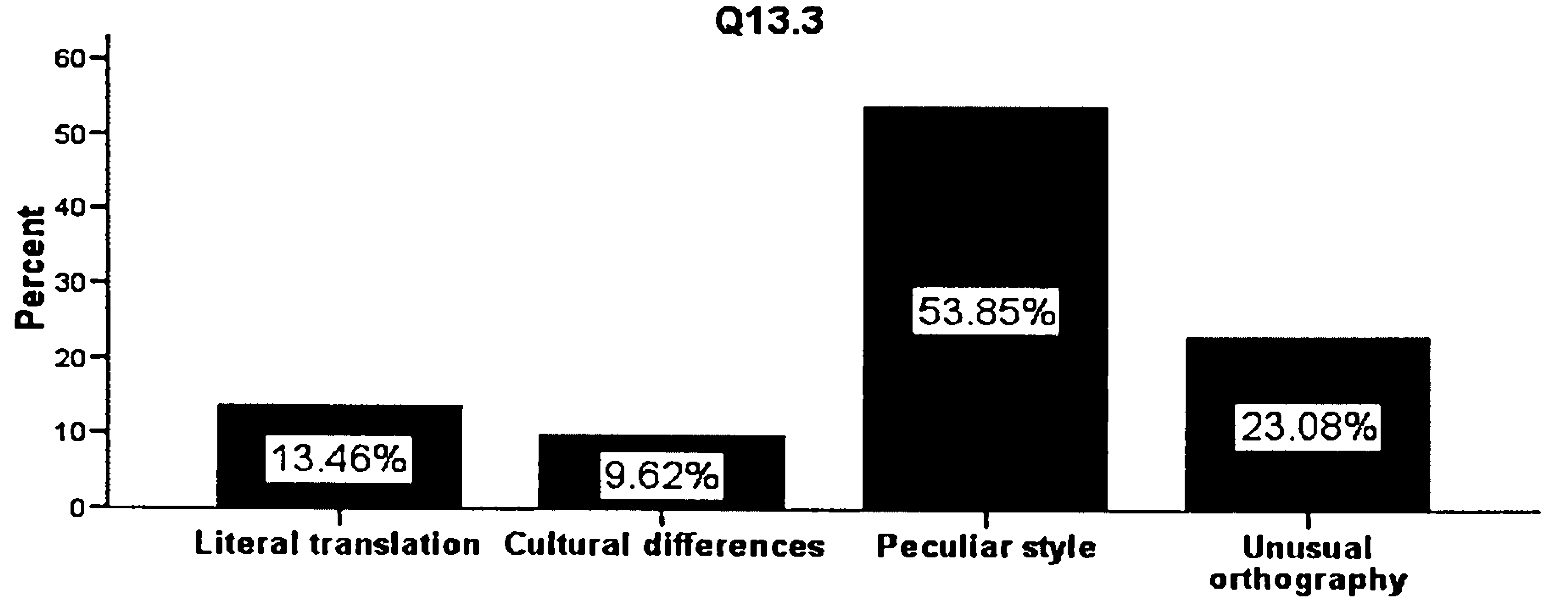


Table 6.39 shows that 53.85% of the respondents selected peculiar style as the key reason for incomprehensibility, 23.08% chose unusual orthography and punctuation, and 13.46% literal translation. 9.62% picked out cultural differences. Those who selected cultural differences would, I believe, not have opted for this if the reason for revelation had been footnoted in the text. That is to say that if the reason for revelation is not footnoted in the translation, an understanding of the text will be lacking.

Extract 14

إنما وليكم الله ورسوله والذين آمنوا الذين يقيمون الصلاة ويؤتون الزكاة وهم راكعون

"Verily, your wali (Protector or Helper) is none other than Allah, His Messenger (عليه الصلاة والسلام*), and the believers, - those who* ***perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat****, and they are Raki'un (those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer).*

Al-Hilali & Khan (5: 55)

In rendering the verse shown above, Al-Hilali and Khan transliterate two key terms into the target language. They believe that there are no equivalents in English that can express the same shade of meaning as these two terms. The two expressions are *As-Salat*, and *Zakat* the latter of which is also culture-specific. Transliteration impedes the transfer of content as the target reader has no previous knowledge of these words. Nor do the translators add in the text or footnote any information to explain these terms. This research opposes Al-Hilali and Khan's technique because transliteration can never replace translation in the matter of rendering the meaning. This

technique can be used in transferring some proper names such as "the Russian Duma" or the like, but not nouns, especially when these nouns have close equivalents in the target language. *As-Ṣalat* can be expressed by *prayers*. This gives roughly the same meaning. When the English reader comes across this term, he will get a sufficiently clear idea about it. As the expression *Zakat* has no equivalent in English, it has to be transliterated and then followed by explanatory terms which have a similar meaning in the target language such as *obligatory regular alms* between brackets. In this way, the reader can establish a better knowledge of this phrase. To sum up, this research claims that the translation above fails to convey a comprehensible meaning in the target language. Before examining the clarity of the above translation for respondents, this research will suggest the following translation which avoids transliteration.

"Your protector (master) is none other than God, His messenger and the believers who perform prayers and pay Zakat (obligatory alms); those who bow down to God".

Table 5.40 shows the rate of comprehensibility claimed by respondents.

Table 6.40

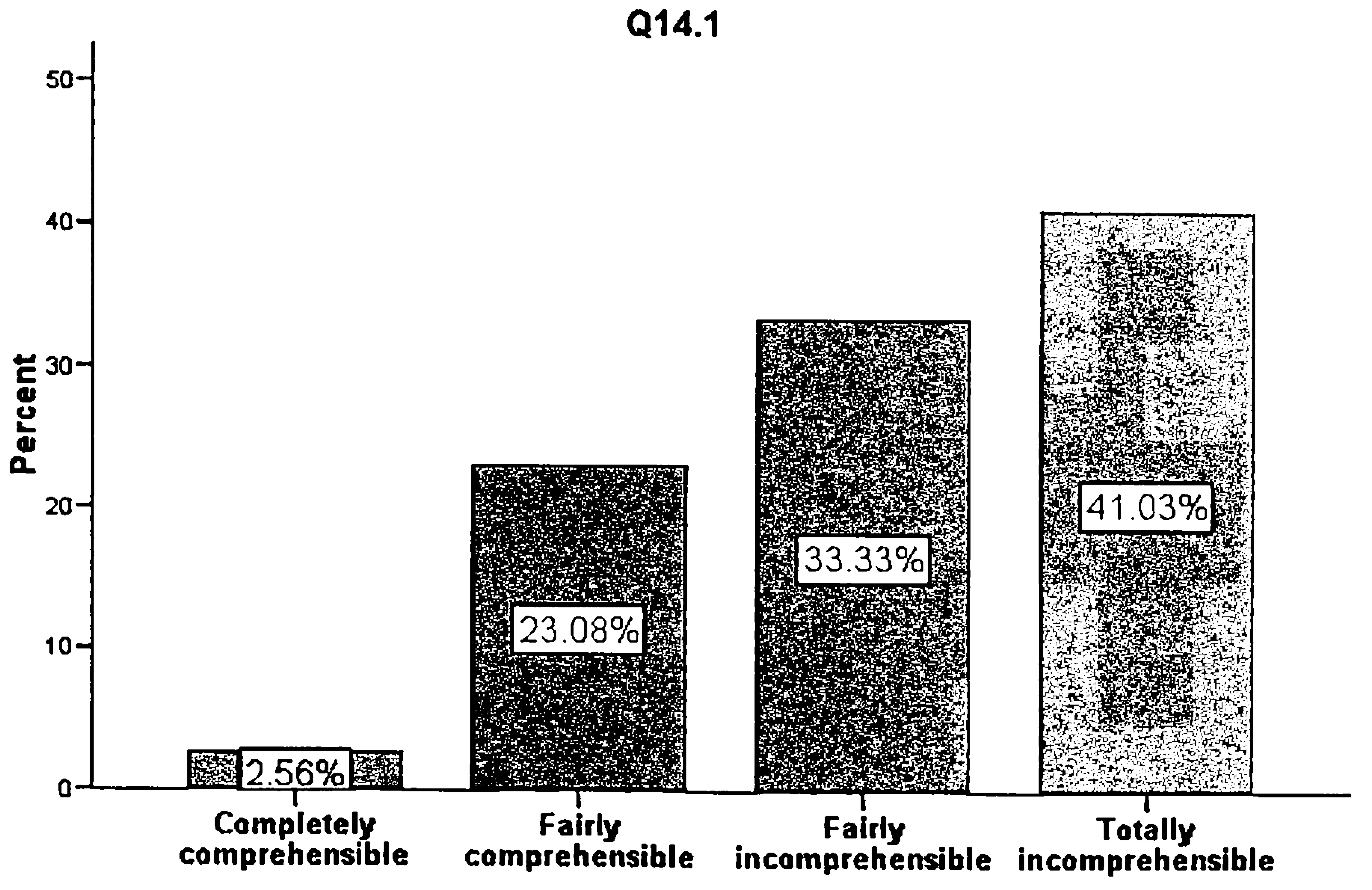
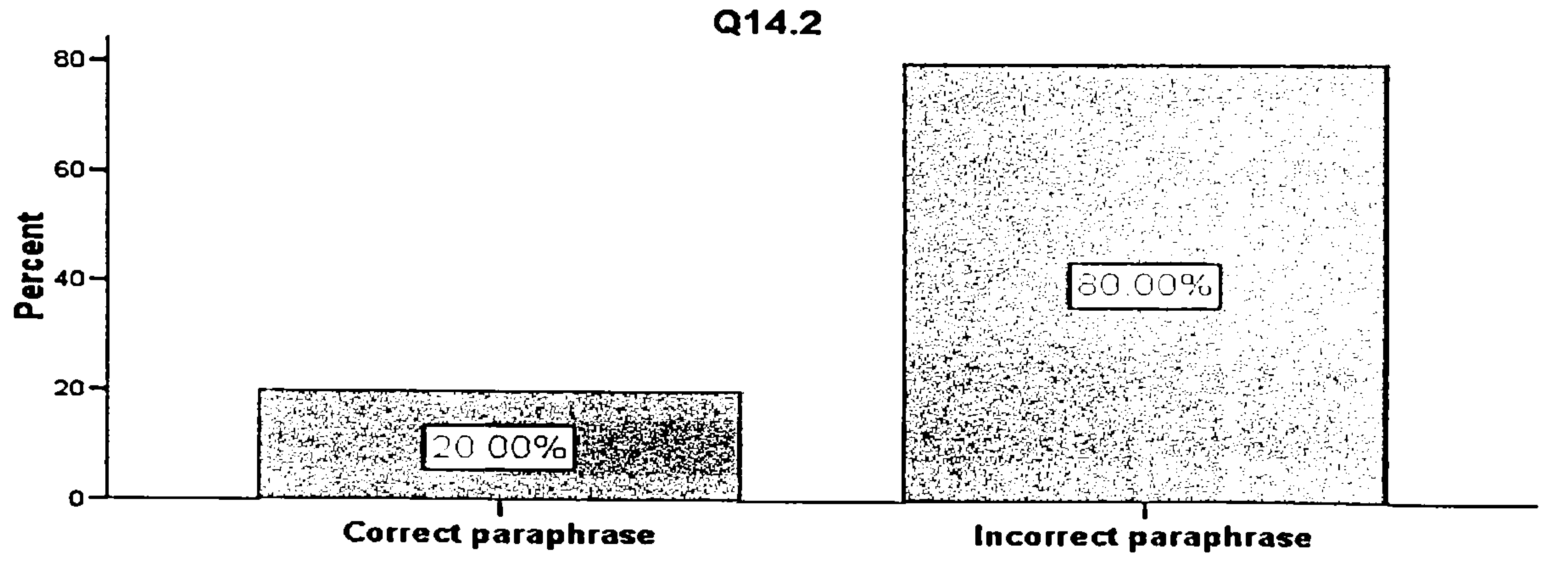


Table 6.40 shows that the translation was completely incomprehensible to 41.03% of the respondents. 33.33% indicated that the translation was fairly incomprehensible, while 23.08% regarded it as fairly clear. 2.56% believed the content was completely obvious. This percentage represents only one respondent. According to his answer, he is accurate. This is because, as mentioned earlier, he lived and studied Arabic in the Muslim world for a few years. He speaks good Arabic as well as having a good knowledge of the Quran. As indicated above, 23.08% of the respondents believed that they understood the content fairly well. Table 6.41 demonstrates to what extent they were correct. This result includes the respondent who indicated completely comprehensible and who was correct in his interpretation.

Table 6.41



This research has concentrated only on testing the rate of understanding of the two terms which are transliterated. Thus, those 25.64% of the respondents who opted for either completely or fairly comprehensible were asked to explain the meaning of the two transliterated elements. 80% were incorrect and only 20% were accurate. This percentage constitutes merely 5.12% of all respondents. In other words, the translation is clear to just those two respondents who have a good knowledge of the Quran. The following table shows the reasons which hindered comprehensibility rated by those who indicated either fairly or completely incomprehensible.

Table 6.42

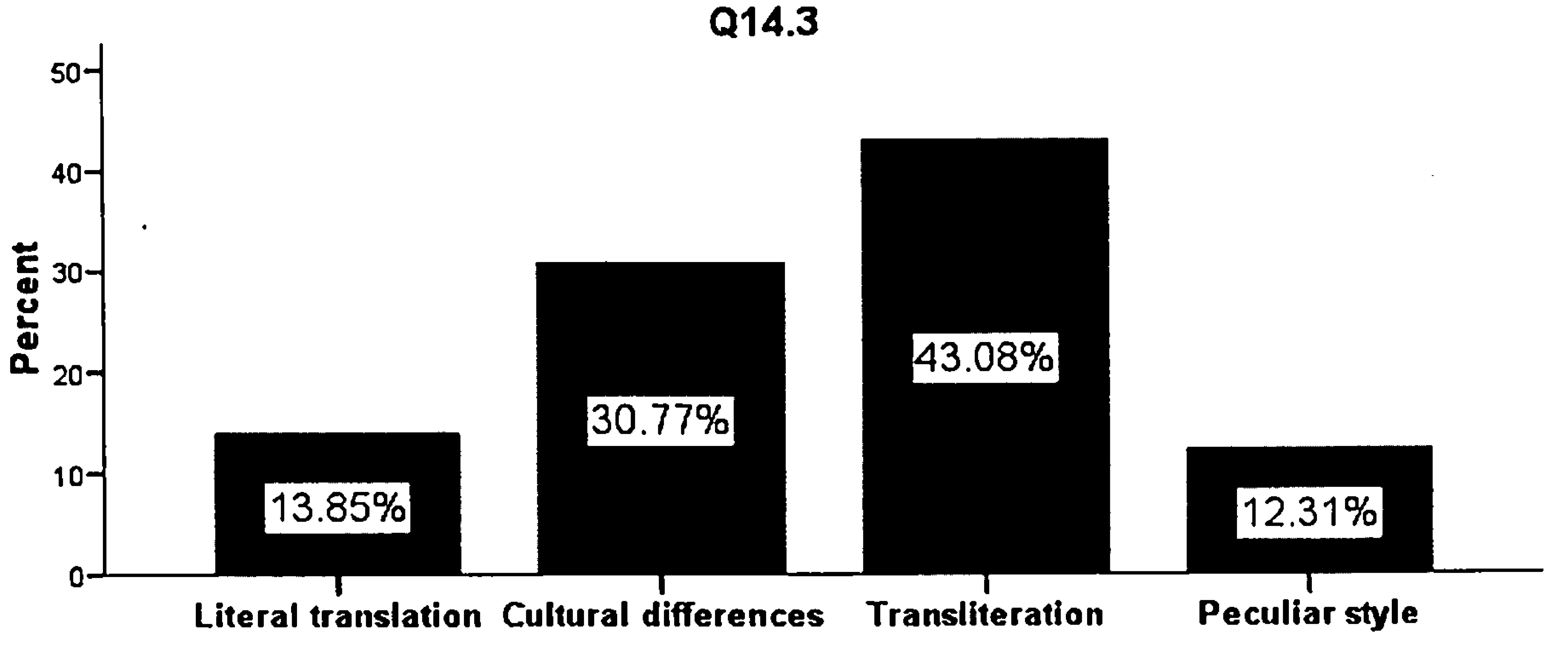


Table 6.42 demonstrates that 43.08% of the respondents selected transliteration as the main reason for incomprehensibility. 30.77% indicated cultural differences, while 13.85% chose literal translation. Finally, 12.31% believed that peculiar style is the reason for causing incomprehensibility.

As explained above, some respondents thought that cultural differences affect the clarity of the text. Once again, if Al-Hilali and Khan had avoided transliteration and transferred the meaning of the two terms *As-Salat* and *Zakat* into English expressions, the meaning of the text would, I believe, have been clear and the respondents would not have selected this reason. Regarding literal translation, it seems that some respondents selected this reason because they could not identify the genuine cause. They perhaps were not sure whether the transliterated terms were old-fashioned English words or Arabic.

Extract 15

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنْ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

"and (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety. And take you (people) the Maqam (place) of Ibrahim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrahim (Abraham) (علية السلام) (stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two Rak'at after the Tawaf of the Ka'bah at Makkah), and We commanded Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isma'il (Ishmael) that they should purify My House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or stay (I'tikaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer).

Al-Hilali & Khan (2:125)

The readability of the extract shown above is extremely difficult. This is because Al-Hilali and Khan load up the text with explanations between brackets and transliterate elements which are also culture-specific. In addition, this translation suffers from literal translation. These weaknesses are interrelated in that each one leads to the next. The literal translation of the term *House* results in transliteration. Transliterating the term *maqam*, which is also cultural, generates excessive explanation between brackets. Also, mentioning the Arab names in the original text leads to the use of brackets. Transliteration is used in the text as a means of solving the cultural elements. This does not help to render the meaning clearly but creates an unreadable text. The excessive use of brackets breaks down the coherence and flow of the sentence. This consequently affects the reader's concentration.

Al-Hilali and Khan also reduce the clarity of the text by transliterating some Muslim rituals between brackets. These practices are added for explanatory information. These are familiar to Muslims but not to others. For instance, Al-Hilali and Khan explain the text by indicating expressions such as *Rak'ah* (unit of prayer), *Tawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) and *I'tikaf* (cleaving to Ka'bah). Since a big number of the target recipients are likely to be non-Muslims, these explanations are pointless and they affect the readability of the text. To sum up, the weaknesses discussed above affect the rendering of the original meaning clearly into the target language. Table 6.43 shows to what extent the translation above was comprehensible to

respondents. Before examining comprehensibility, this research will suggest the following translation.

"We (God) made the Ka'bah a place of resort for people and a place of safety, allowed by you (Muslims) to take the place of Abraham as a place of prayers. We (God) commanded Abraham and Ishmael to purify Our House, the Ka'bah, for those who walk around it, for those who cleave to it, and for those who bow down and prostrate themselves" (my translation according to Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 1: 199-200 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 1: 413).

Although this suggested translation sounds better to recipients, it still suffers from a cultural element. This element is *place of Abraham.* However, this problem can be explained by means of footnoting. *Place of Abraham* is a very small raised area attached to the Ka'bah which Abraham stood on and called people to perform pilgrimage to the Ka'bah the house of God. This place also has Abraham's footprint. Muslims believe that the Ka'bah is the most sacred place in the world. Let us now look at the rate of comprehensibility claimed by respondents.

Table 6.43

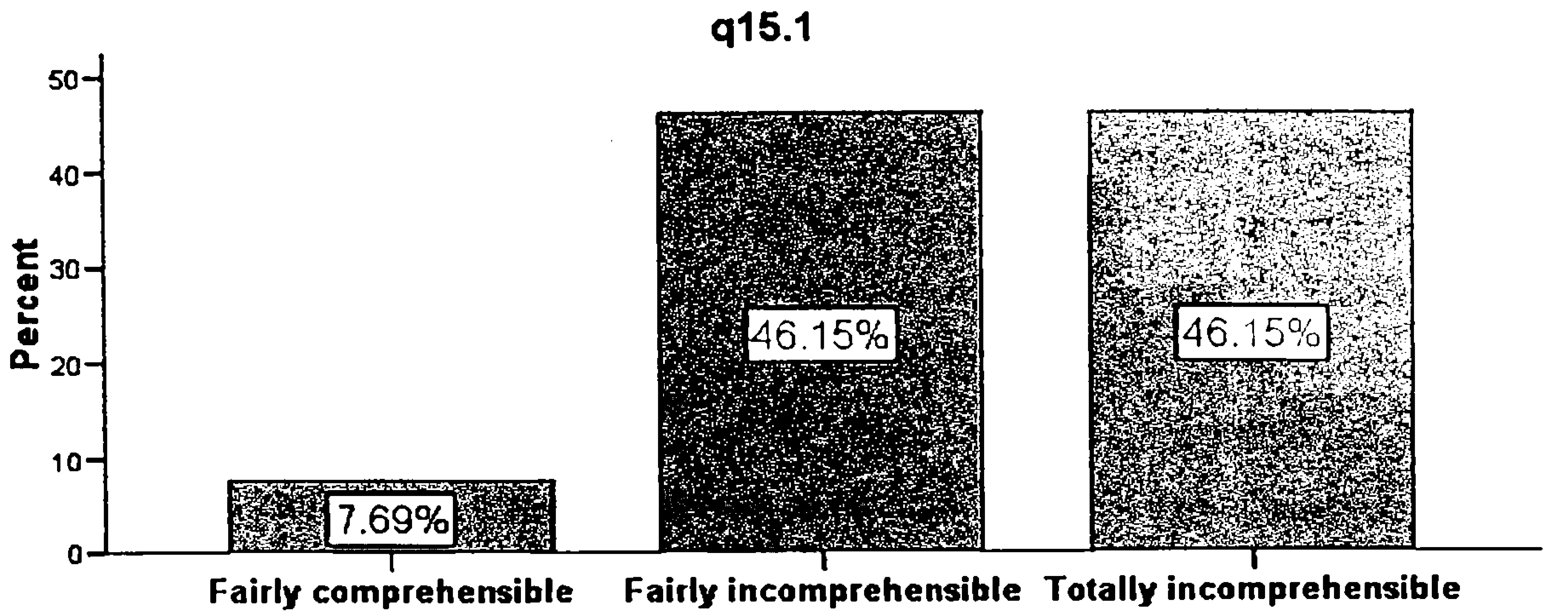


Table 6.43 shows that 46.15% of the respondents did not understand the extract at all. The same percentage indicated that they found it fairly incomprehensible. Only 7.69% thought they comprehended the text fairly well, while none of the respondents selected completely comprehensible. Since this extract is quite long, this research did not ask respondents to reword it. However, those respondents who opted for fairly comprehensible commented on and

summarized the text. Their paraphrases and comments demonstrated that they did not understand the meaning as their notes are unrelated to the real meaning. They noted that brackets impede comprehensibility. Hence, those who believed they understood the text fairly well are uncertain. In other words, the extract discussed above was unclear to nearly all respondents. The following table demonstrates the reasons that affected comprehensibility claimed by respondents.

Table 6.44

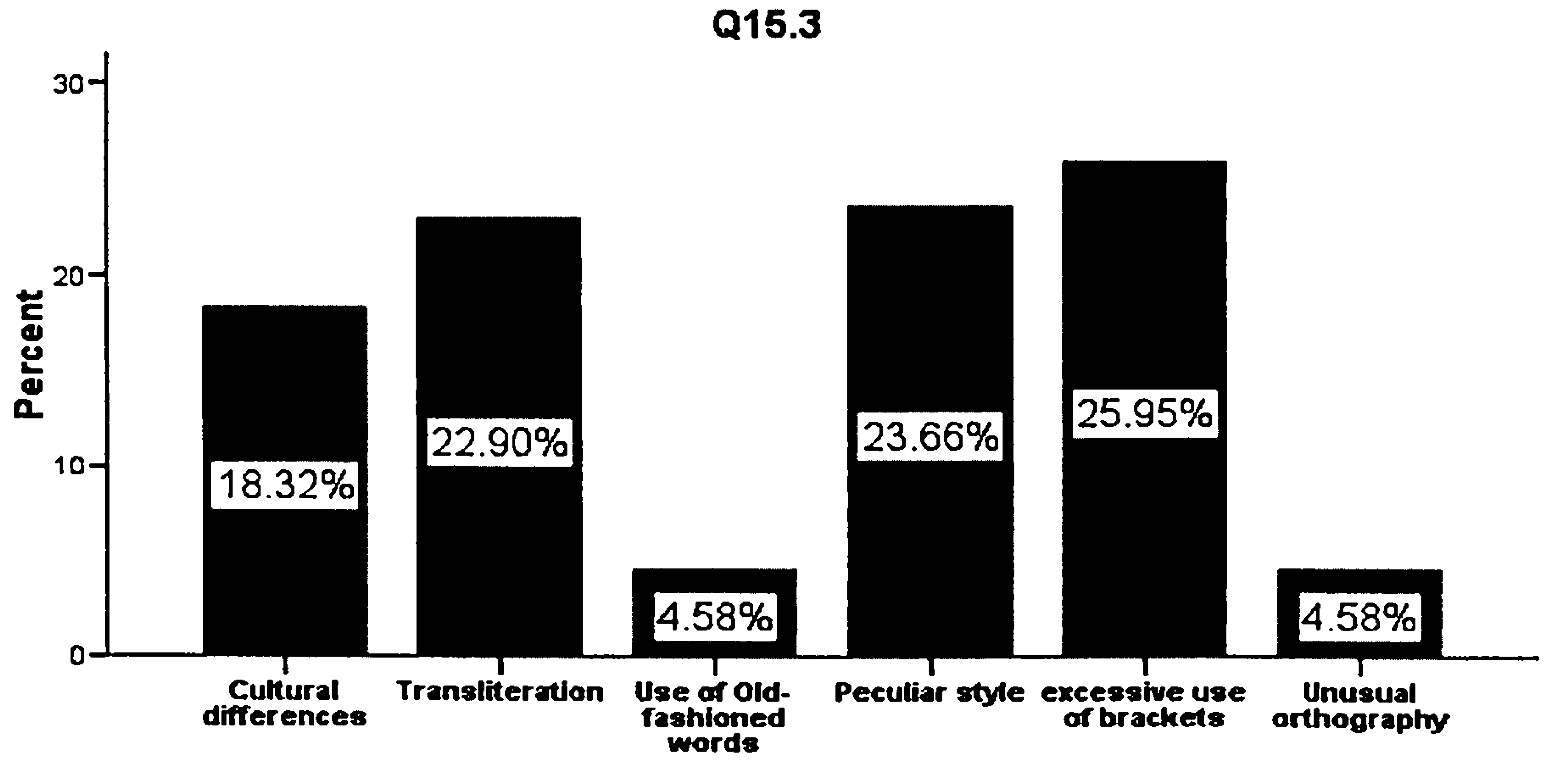


Table 6.44 indicates that 25.95% of the respondents selected excessive use of brackets as the main reason for incomprehensibility. Then they chose peculiar style as the second reason. 23.66% opted for this reason. 22.90% chose transliteration while 18.32% chose cultural difference. Some respondents also believed that both use of old-fashioned words and unusual orthography diminish comprehensibility. Each of these reason, was selected by 4.58% of respondents. This table shows that respondents believe that excessive use of brackets, peculiar style, transliteration and cultural difference result in incomprehensibility. This result supports the research claim.

Extract 16

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ قَدِ اسْتَكْثَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَّلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

*"And on the Day when He will gather them (all) together (and say): "**O you assembly of jinn!** Many did you mislead of men," and their Auliya` (friends and helpers) amongst men will say: "Our Lord! We benefited one from the other, but now we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us." He will say: "The Fire be your dwelling-place, you will dwell therein forever, except as Allah may will. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."*

Al-Hilali & Khan (6: 128)

The aforementioned translation is unintelligible to recipients for two reasons. First, Al-Hilali and Khan transliterate a term which is believed to be the key word for understanding the meaning of the verse. The transliterated expression is *jinn*. Its closest equivalent in English is "devils". In this verse, according to the Quran, God warns people and devils by assuring that He will muster them for reckoning. God exposes an event which will happen on that day. In this event, He will remind devils and men of their wrong deeds. Then God will expose their torment after they confess their sins.

The addressees in this verse are devils. Since the target recipient is likely to be unfamiliar with the Arabic term jinn, they will definitely fail to understand to whom the speech is addressed and they will not understand who misled people. Consequently, the technique of transliteration not only fails to transfer the meaning clearly but also creates a cultural problem.

Second, style poses a real obstacle in understanding the extract. The phrases of the text are not conjoined properly. This is because the translators transfer the original Arabic sequence of the phrases into English, which seems odd to the target reader. This also produces incorrect punctuation marks. This confuses target readers and hence they fail to understand the meaning. Moreover, Al-Hilali and Khan mistranslate the term *auliya*. They translate this term with the same meaning in every verse where this term appears. They translate it as *friends and helpers* though this is not correct.

Before this research looks at the comprehensibility of the aforementioned extract to respondents, it will attempt to retranslate the original content in a better form. The suggested new translation is as follows.

"One day God will muster them all together and say: "O you assembly of devils! You misled many people. Then the devils' followers amongst men will say: O our Lord! We have benefited one from the other (men and devils), but herein we have arrived at our fate which you appointed for us. Then God will say: the Hellfire is your dwelling-place; you will therein live forever except as God may will. Surely your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing" (my translation according to Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 431-2 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 138).

The following table shows the degree of comprehensibility as stated by the respondents.

Table 6.45

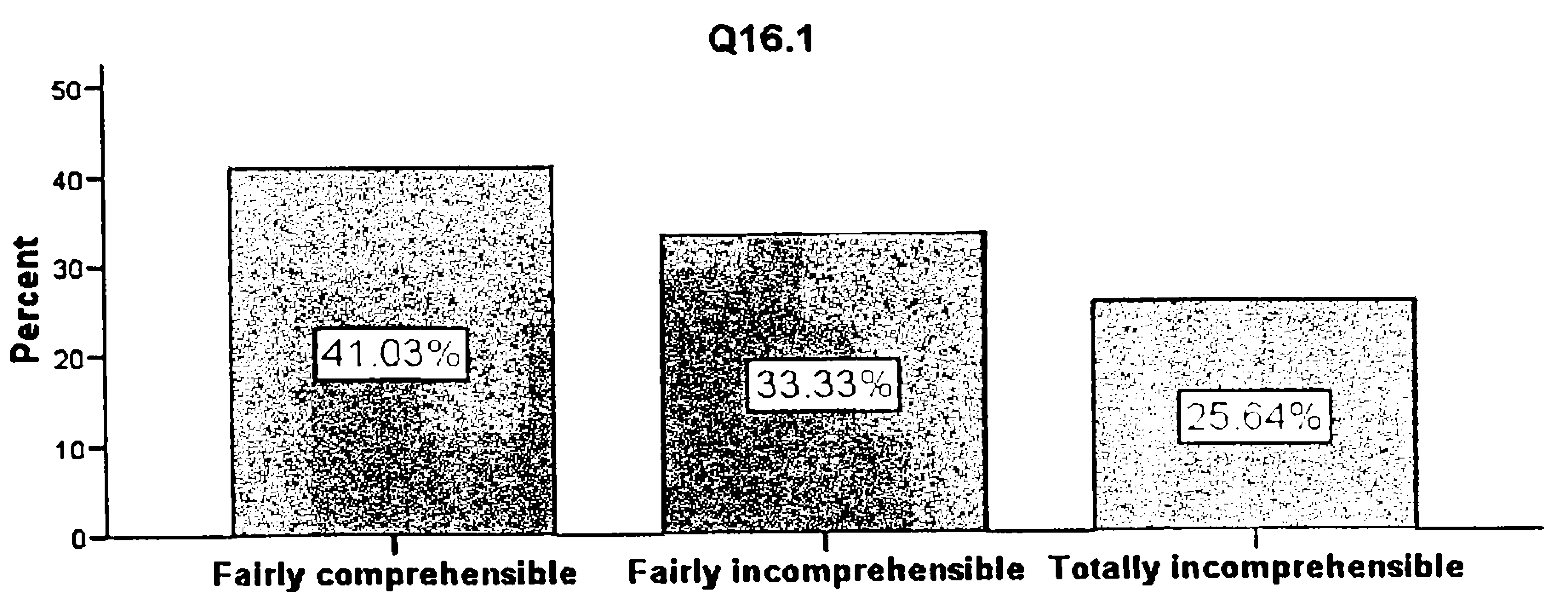
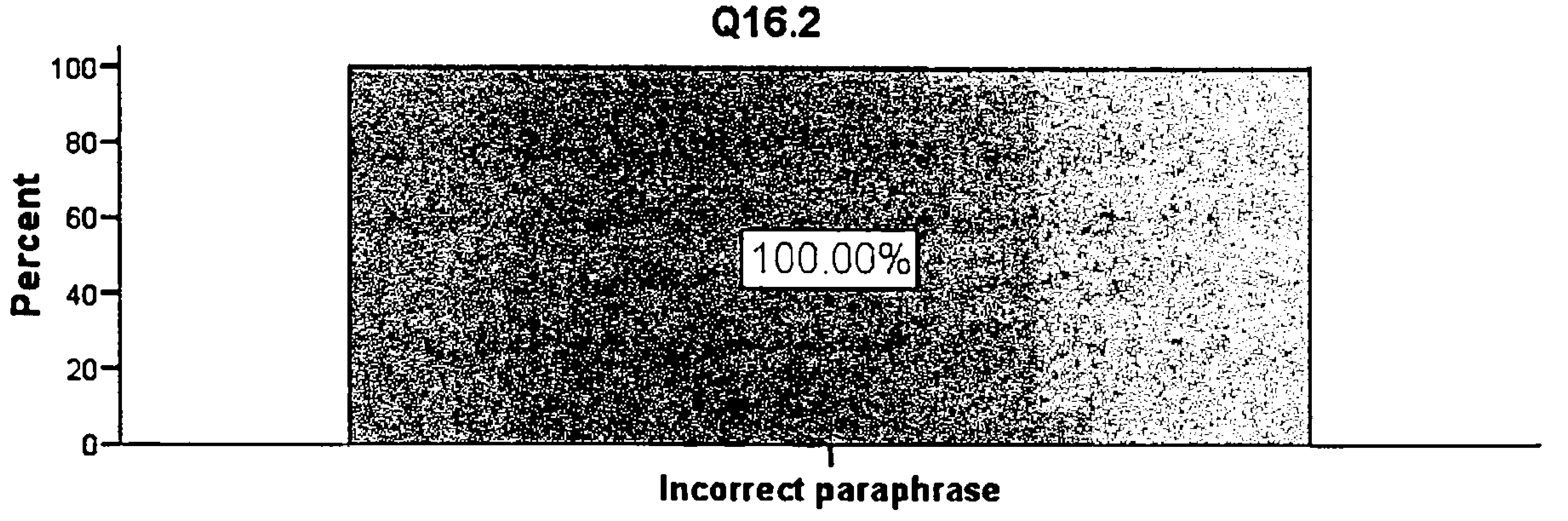


Table 6.45 indicates that 41.03% of the respondents believed that they understood the meaning fairly well. 33.33% indicated that the content was fairly incomprehensible, while 25.64% claimed it was totally incomprehensible. None of the respondents selected completely comprehensible.

Since the term *jinn* is a vital element in understanding the meaning of the verse, and in order to examine the accuracy of the respondents who opted for fairly comprehensible, they were asked to explain the meaning of the term *jinn*. Their response revealed that they were all incorrect, which

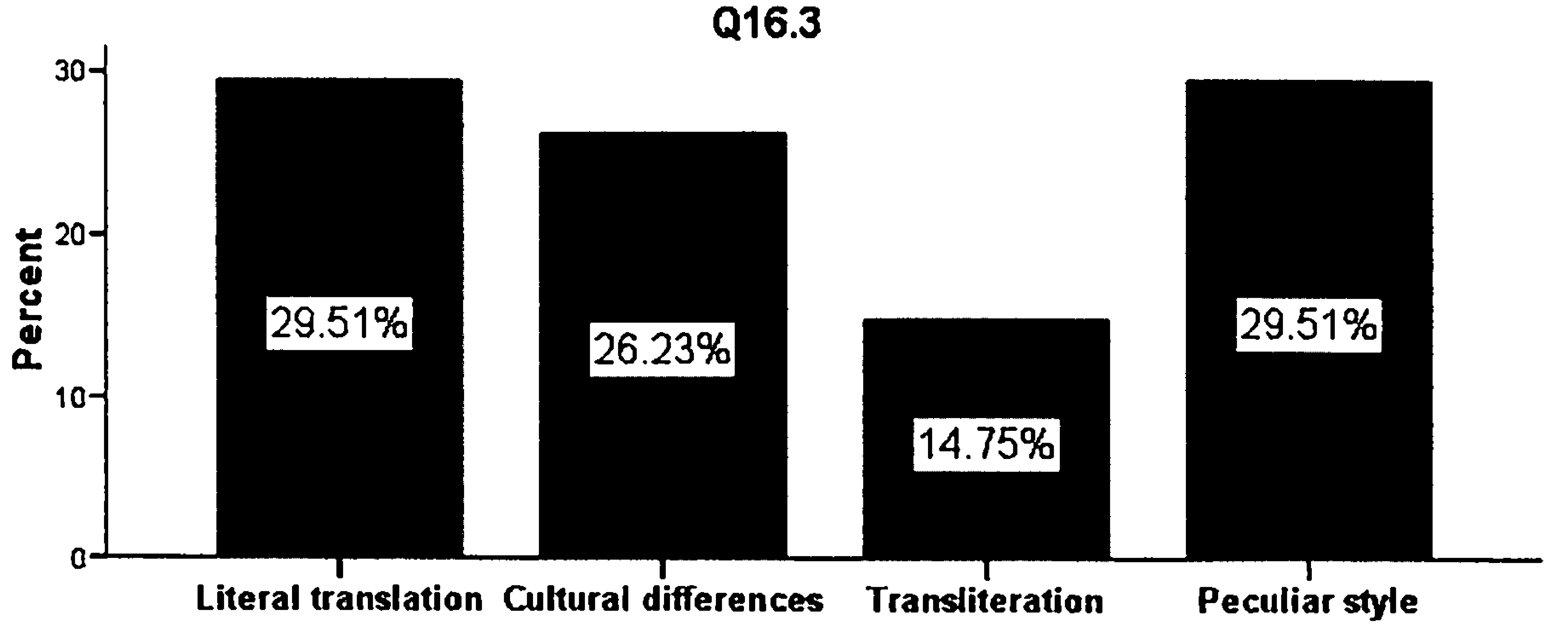
means that they did not understand the extract. Some of those respondents thought that the word *jinn* refers to false prophets. Others believed that it means hypocrites, while others supposed it stands for a group of non-religious people. The following table shows that they were all incorrect.

Table 6.46



The following table shows the reasons for incomprehensibility claimed by those who opted for either fairly or completely incomprehensible.

Table 6.47



As demonstrated in table 6.47, literal translation and peculiar style were both chosen by 29.51% of the respondents. 26.23% opted for cultural translation while 14.75% chose transliteration. This research postulates that literal translation and cultural difference were chosen as a result of transliteration. This is because the respondents did not understand the term *jinn*. Hence, some

respondents presumed that the term *jinn* was a concept which is culturally specific to the Arabs. Others assumed that this term was translated literally. If the expression *jinn* was transferred as *devils* into English, respondents would probably have understood the meaning clearly and they would not have selected literal translation and cultural differences as reasons for incomprehensibility.

Extract 17

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةً وَفَرْشًا كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ
(142) ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ مِنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا
اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (143) وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ
اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّاكُمُ
اللَّهُ بِهَذَا

"Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what Allah hath provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan: for he is to you and avowed enemy. (Take) eight (head of cattle) in (four) pairs: of sheep a pair, and of goats a pair; say, hath He forbidden the two males, or the two females, or (the young) which the wombs of the two females enclose? Tell me with knowledge if you are truthful: Of camels a pair, and oxen a pair; say, hath He forbidden the two males, or the two females, or (the young) which the wombs of the two females enclose? - Were ye present when Allah ordered you such a thing?

Ali (6: 142-4)

In the pre-Islamic era, the pagan Arabs used to claim that God had forbidden the eating of some types of camels. Among these were those she-camels which had given birth five times, and she-camels which had given birth to female and male twins. In addition, there was a belief amongst pagan Arabs that if a she-camel gave birth to a male then they should not eat it; they dedicated it to their idols, but if it gave birth to a female then it was lawful to be eaten. God hence revealed this verse in order to both disprove their falsehoods and to allow Muslims to eat these kinds of camels.

The above text translated by Ali is unintelligible to the target reader, not only because this verse was revealed on account of a specific event, but also because of the readability of the extract. Ali transfers the original style literally, producing an odd style in the target language. The Quran uses

a lofty language; the expressions used are very eloquent and concise and some terms are ellipted. This style is Quran-specific and cannot be transferred to English. In order to transfer the original meaning clearly, the translator has to analyze and interpret the meaning and then render it according to the style of the target language. He also has to add some explanatory information in the target text in order to compensate for the ellipted terms and produce an obvious and complete meaning. Otherwise, the whole task will be pointless.

The original structure is composed in a coherent and cohesive way. Phrases and clauses are linked and flow properly. The Arab reader is unlikely to fail to understand the verse. By contrast, Ali's translation lacks coherence and cohesion. This produces loose phrases which are vague such as: *(Take) eight (head of cattle) in (four) pairs: of sheep a pair, and of goats a pair;* and *Of camels a pair, and oxen a pair;*. These two clauses do not seem to be comprehensible in the text because the translator transfers the original style literally. He does not render them in a natural English style. Moreover, the word *forbidden* is senseless in the target text because it is not properly clarified. It is not clear what is meant by "forbidden". Before examining the degree of comprehensibility of the translation discussed above, this research will retranslate the same extract in a better way.

"God has created cattle; some to be used for burden and some to be slaughtered. Eat of what God has provided for you and do not follow the path of Satan; for he is surely a foe to you. Cattle are of eight types; two types of sheep, male and female, and two types of goats, male and female. Ask them (Muhammad), has God forbidden eating the two males or the two females? Or what the wombs of the two females contain? Tell me (unbelievers) with (certain) knowledge if you are truthful. Cattle also includes camels male and female, and oxen male and female. Ask them, has He (God) forbidden eating the two males or the two females? Or what the wombs of the two females contain? Or were you (pagans) present when God ordered you such a thing?" (my translation according to Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 441-2 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 3: 351).

The following table demonstrates how comprehensible the content was to respondents.

Table 6.49

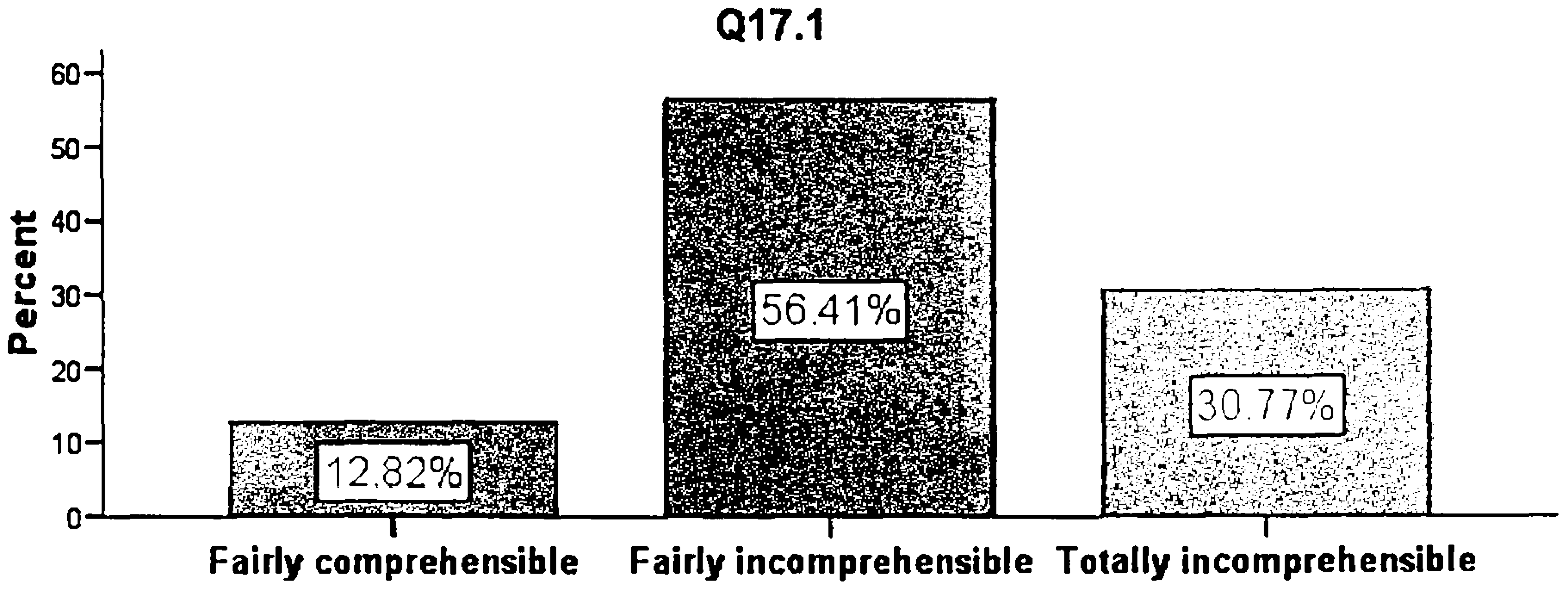


Table 6.49 indicates that 56.41% of the respondents revealed that the translation was fairly incomprehensible and 30.77% totally incomprehensible. 12.82% thought they grasped the meaning fairly well, while none opted for totally comprehensible. In order to examine the accuracy of the answers of those who opted for fairly comprehensible, this research asked them to paraphrase the extract. The following table illustrates whether they were correct or not.

Table 6.50

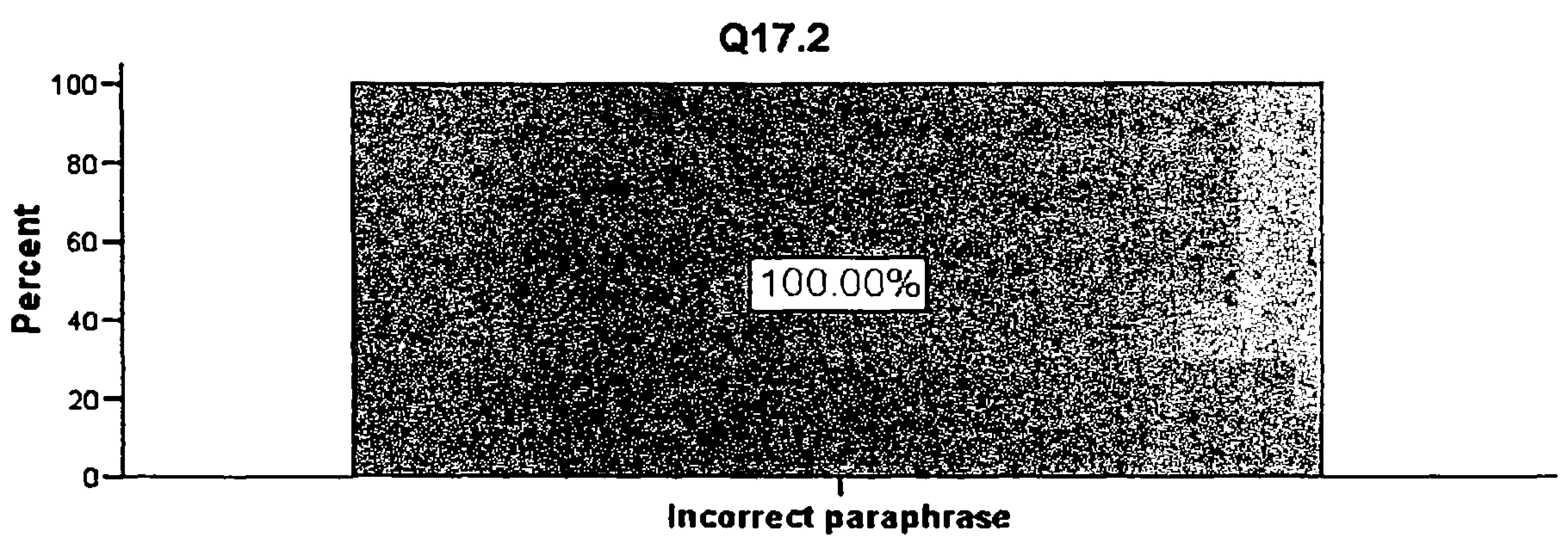


Table 6.50 reveals that all those who thought they understood the meaning of the text mentioned above fairly well were incorrect. What they paraphrased was irrelevant to the real meaning. Some of the respondents thought that God instructs us not to be greedy. One understood that we should

have only what is enough to keep us alive. Others understood that males and pregnant females are forbidden to be eaten which is very far from the context. Some guessed that this verse talks about homosexuality. The paraphrases of some other respondents were meaningless.

Having shown that the text in question is virtually unintelligible to all respondents, I will look now at the reasons for incomprehensibility suggested by those respondents who selected either fairly or totally incomprehensible. Table 6.51 explains this.

Table 6.51

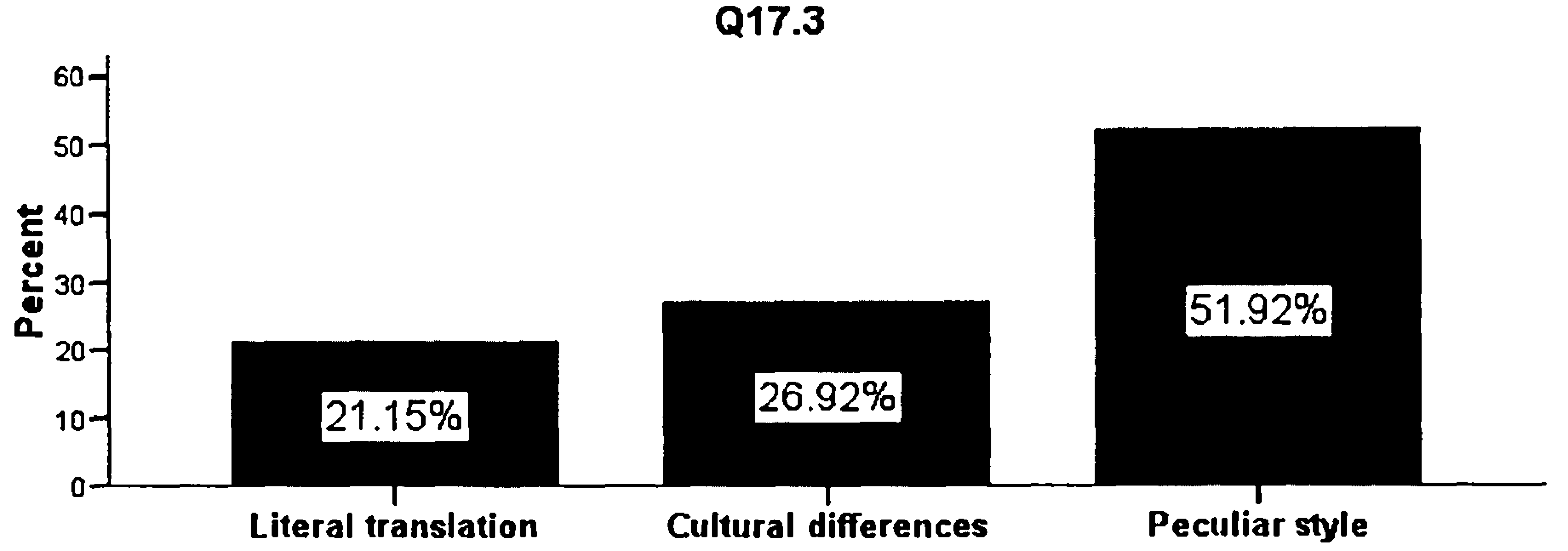


Table 6.51 shows that 51.92% of the respondents indicated that peculiar style was the main element that impeded clarity. 26.92% selected cultural differences while 21.15% chose literal translation. It is worth mentioning that those respondents who selected cultural differences as a reason for incomprehensibility were inaccurate. They probably selected this reason because they did not understand the text and more importantly because they could not pinpoint the real reason. Regarding literal translation, this cause was presumably chosen because some respondents thought that the extract comprises English words but with unclear meaning. They guessed that these words are old-fashioned.

Extract 18

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

*O you who believe! Fulfil (your) obligations. Lawful to you (for food) are all the beasts of cattle except that which will be announced to you (herein), game (also) being unlawful when you assume **Ihram** for Hajj or Umrah (pilgrimage). Verily, Allah commands that which He wills".*

Al-Hilali & Khan (5: 1)

The meaning is not very obvious in the translation above for two reasons. First, Al-Hilali and Khan transliterate the culture-specific term *Ihram* which is a key word for understanding the text. Second, the meaning is transferred in an awkward style. Culturally, the term *Ihram* is well known to Muslims because it stands for a very important ritual in Islam. For non-Muslim and non-Arab readers, this term does not have any significance as it is religion-specific. An understanding of the text is lacking without a prior knowledge of this term. Without particular knowledge of this term, the reader will have several possible interpretations. Any interpretation other than the real meaning would generate misunderstanding and hence distort the content of the original text.

The term *Ihram* in Arabic has two meanings. The first one is a white cotton robe worn by men when they are pilgrims to Mecca, formed from pieces of cloth wound around the waist and over the shoulder. The second meaning is the state of holiness in the pilgrimage period conferred or symbolized by the wearing of the Ihram. This term is mentioned in the Quran in different verses. The denotation of this expression in some verses differs from others. Presumably, Al-Hilali and Khan thought that there is no expression in English that can transfer the same precise meaning as this term in either case. This is why they transliterate it into the target language. Unfortunately, this technique does not convey a clear meaning in the target language. In order to transfer the meaning of the term *Ihram* clearly to the target reader, it has to be transferred according to its meaning in each verse. Through doing this, the text will be rendered in a comprehensible way. Based on this claim, this research will attempt to retranslate the verse mentioned above as follows.

"O, you who believe! Fulfil your obligations. It is lawful for you to eat all the beasts of cattle except that which will be named herein. Hunting is unlawful while you are in a state of ritual consecration during the pilgrimage. Certainly God decrees whatsoever He wills" (my translation according to Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 197)

The following table illustrates the degree of intelligibility of Al-Hilali and Khan's translation stated by respondents.

Table 6.52

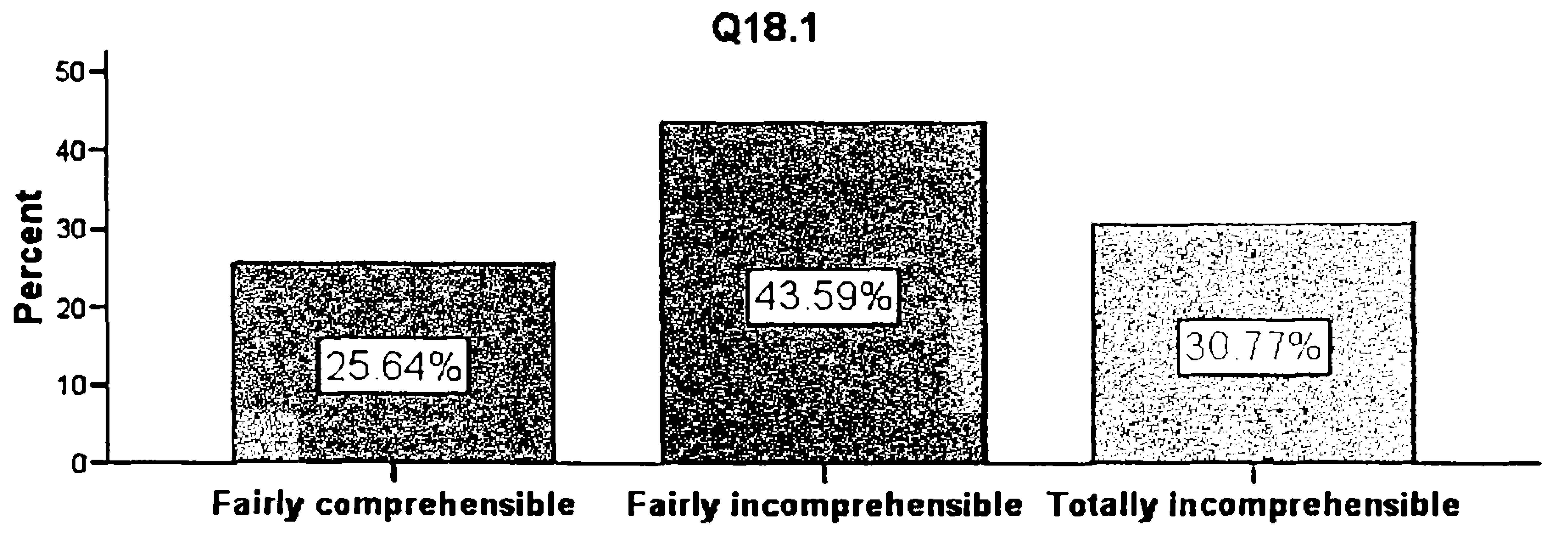
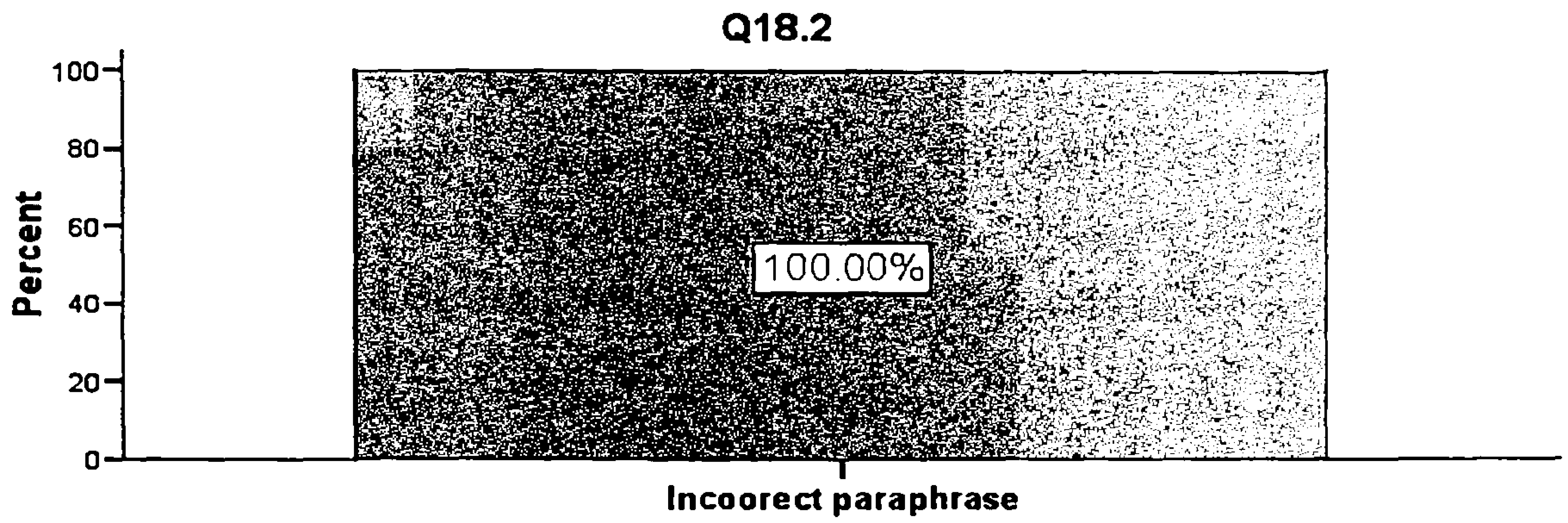


Table 6.52 demonstrates that 43.59% of the respondents indicated that they found the meaning of the text fairly incomprehensible, 30.77% did not grasp the content at all and 25.64% thought the extract was fairly comprehensible. None of the respondents deemed that they understood the meaning totally.

As the term *Ihram* is a key word in understanding the meaning of the verse, this research concentrated only on examining the respondents' comprehension of this term. Thus, those respondents who believed they understood the meaning fairly well were asked to explain what *Ihram* is. None of them indicated a correct answer including those two respondents who have a knowledge of Islamic culture. The respondents' explanations were irrelevant to the original meaning. Two of them guessed that *Ihram* means fasting. Others stated wrong meanings such as "duty", "oneself" and "diet". In other words, the translation was incomprehensible to all of the respondents. Table 6.53 shows this.

Table 6.53



In order to identify the reasons that impede comprehension of Al-Hilali and Khan's translation, those respondents who opted for either fairly or completely incomprehensible were asked to indicate the reasons which prevented them from understanding the content. Table 6.54 shows their suggested reasons.

Table 6.54

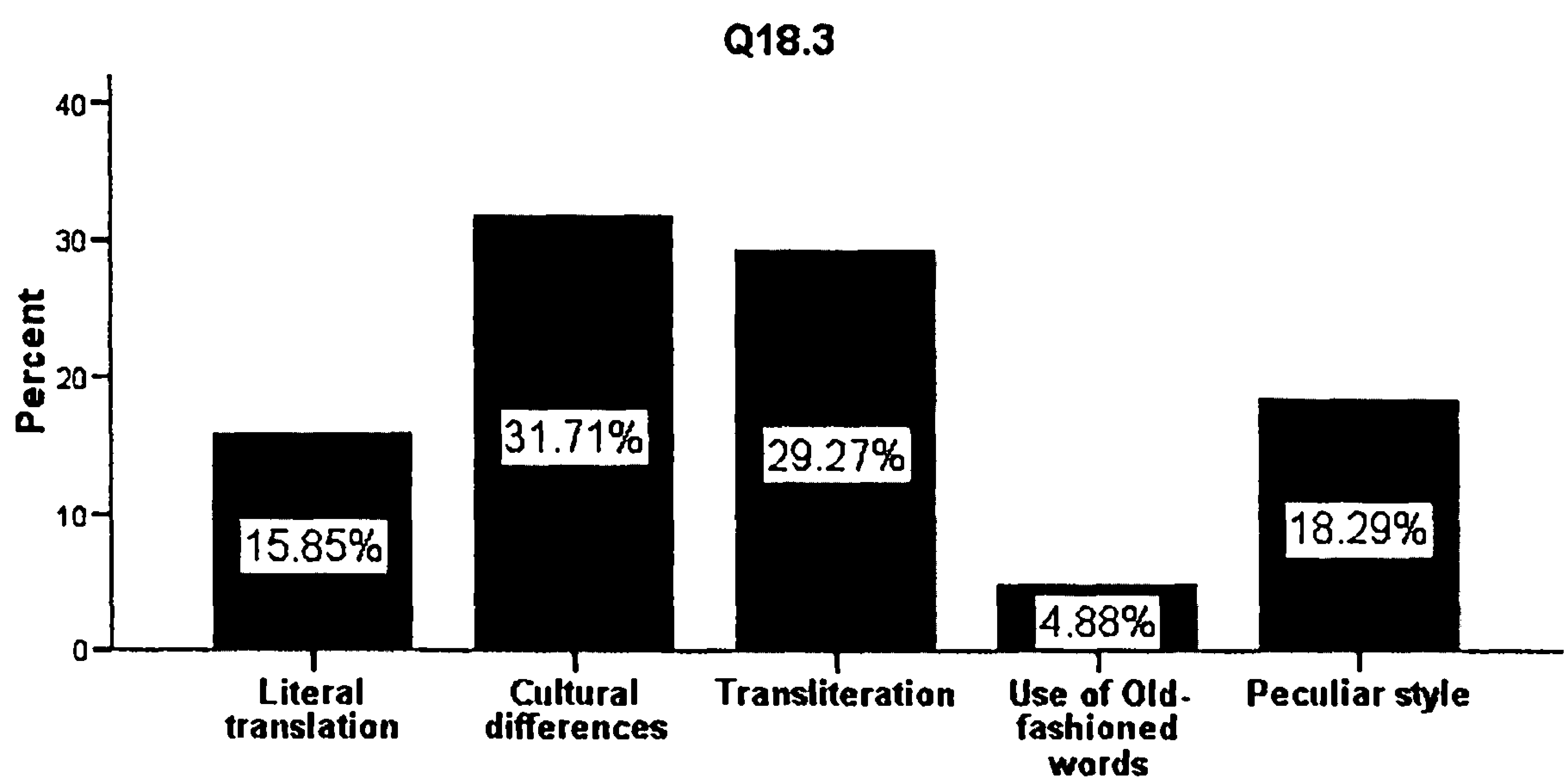


Table 6.44 shows that 31.71% of the respondents believed that cultural differences cause incomprehensibility, 29.27% chose transliteration, and 18.29% peculiar style. 15.85% opted for literal translation and 4.88% use of old-fashioned words.

Cultural differences were selected as the main reason for incomprehensibility. This is a consequence of transliteration. If the translation was freed from transliteration, those respondents, I believe, would not have selected it. Those who opted for peculiar style were right because the style is difficult. Regarding literal translation, presumably, some respondents opted for this reason because they could not identify the real reason. To sum up, transliteration caused confusion for the reader in that they couldn't understand the content or distinguish the reason for incomprehensibility.

Extract 19

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ آمِنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ وُجُوهًا فَنَرُدَّهَا
عَلَى أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا

*"O ye **People of the Book**! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and **turn them hindwards**, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out".*

Ali (4: 47)

This research contends that Ali's translation of the aforementioned verse does not transfer the meaning of the original text clearly into English. This is due to two main weaknesses. First, Ali translates the first clause of the verse fairly literally into the target language. The verse is يا ايها الذين اوتوا الكتاب. Ali translates this clause literally into "*O ye People of the Book*". This translation generates a cultural void and vague meaning. On some occasions, the Quran uses the expression الكتاب *the book* to refer to any of the three scriptures revealed by God (Old and New Testaments and the Quran). So, this is very clear to Arab and Muslim readers. Dissimilarly, the term *book* in English does not have the same connotation. It normally only means a collection of printed or manuscript pages sewn or glued together along one side and bound between rigid boards or flexible covers (Encarta World English Dictionary 2004). The English reader would not be expected to understand that the word *book* means Scripture. Consequently, the translation is meaningless. Moreover, Ali's translation of this clause is not as exact as the original.

Second, Ali uses a very old-fashioned word which is unfamiliar to the contemporary English reader. This word cannot be found in most English dictionaries. The word is *hindwards* meaning 'back'. With this term, the Quran shows the punishment for those who do not believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad. Since this word is unclear to the reader, the image is lacking and hence the reader will not grasp the message. By using very old-fashioned words, Ali fails to render the meaning obviously. Moreover, Ali transfers the meaning in an odd style to the English reader. This style, to some extent, affects the readability of the text. To sum up, respondents stated four reasons that impede the comprehensibility of the extract shown above. They are, literal translation, cultural difference, use of old fashioned words and peculiar style. Table 6.55 shows to what extent the translation was clear to respondents. Before looking at the results of the questionnaire, this research will retranslate the verse mentioned above in a better way, as follows.

"O, you who have been given the Scriptures (Christians and Jews)! Believe in what We have revealed (to Muhammad) confirming what is with you, before We obliterate faces and then turn them upon their backs, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers. Certainly, God's command is always executed" (my translation according to Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 2: 92-4 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 2: 324).

Table 6.55

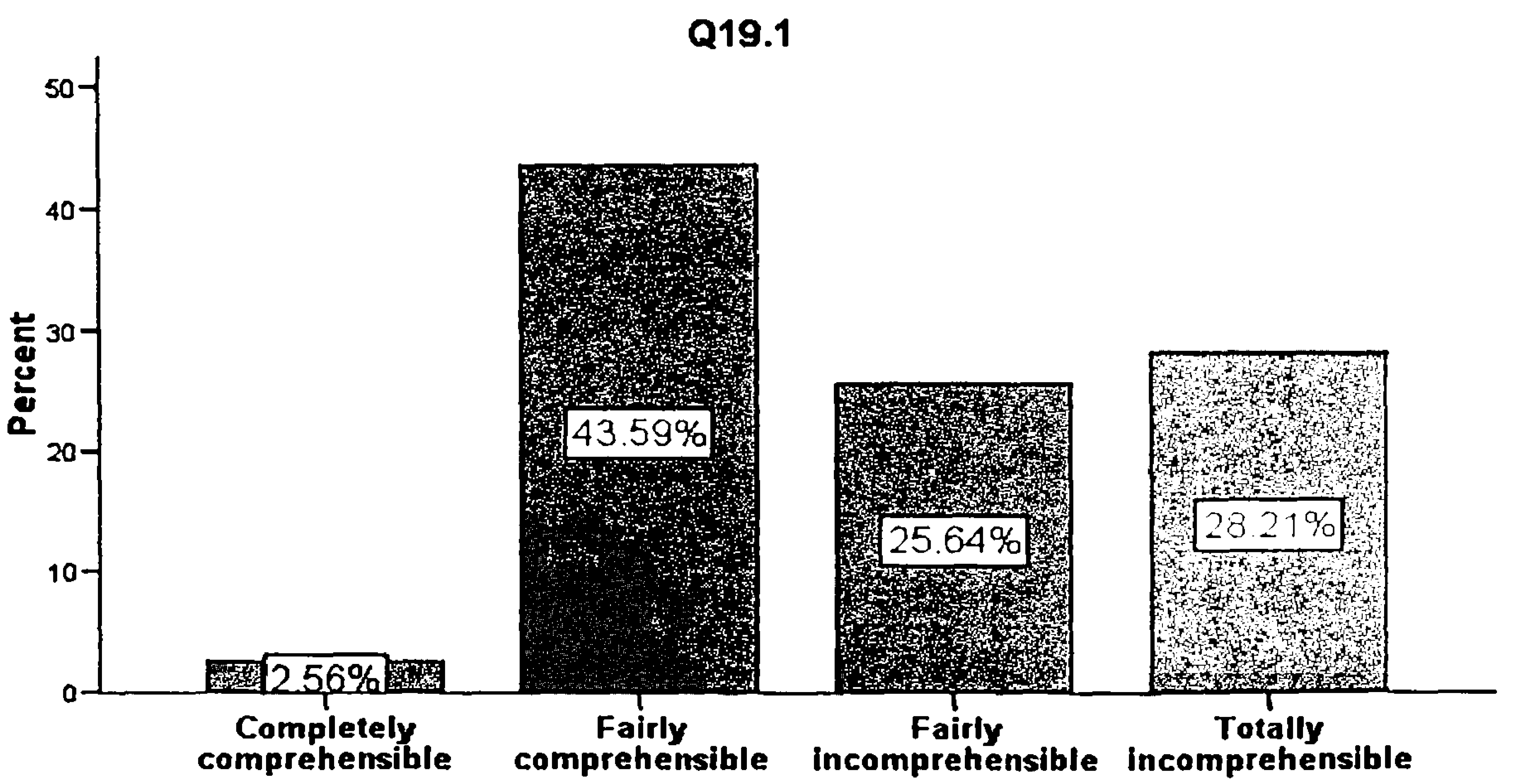


Table 6.55 demonstrates that 43.59% of the respondents believed that they understood the content fairly well. 28.21% indicated they did not understand the text at all, while 25.64% regarded the text as fairly incomprehensible. Finally, 2.56% claimed that the meaning was clear. This last percentage constitutes only one respondent. So, 46.15% of the respondents selected either completely or fairly comprehensible while 53.85% chose either fairly or completely incomprehensible. Table 6.56 shows to what extent the respondents who opted for both totally and fairly comprehensible were correct. In order to examine their responses, this questionnaire asked them to explain who *people of the book* are and what *turn them hindwards* means.

Table 6.56

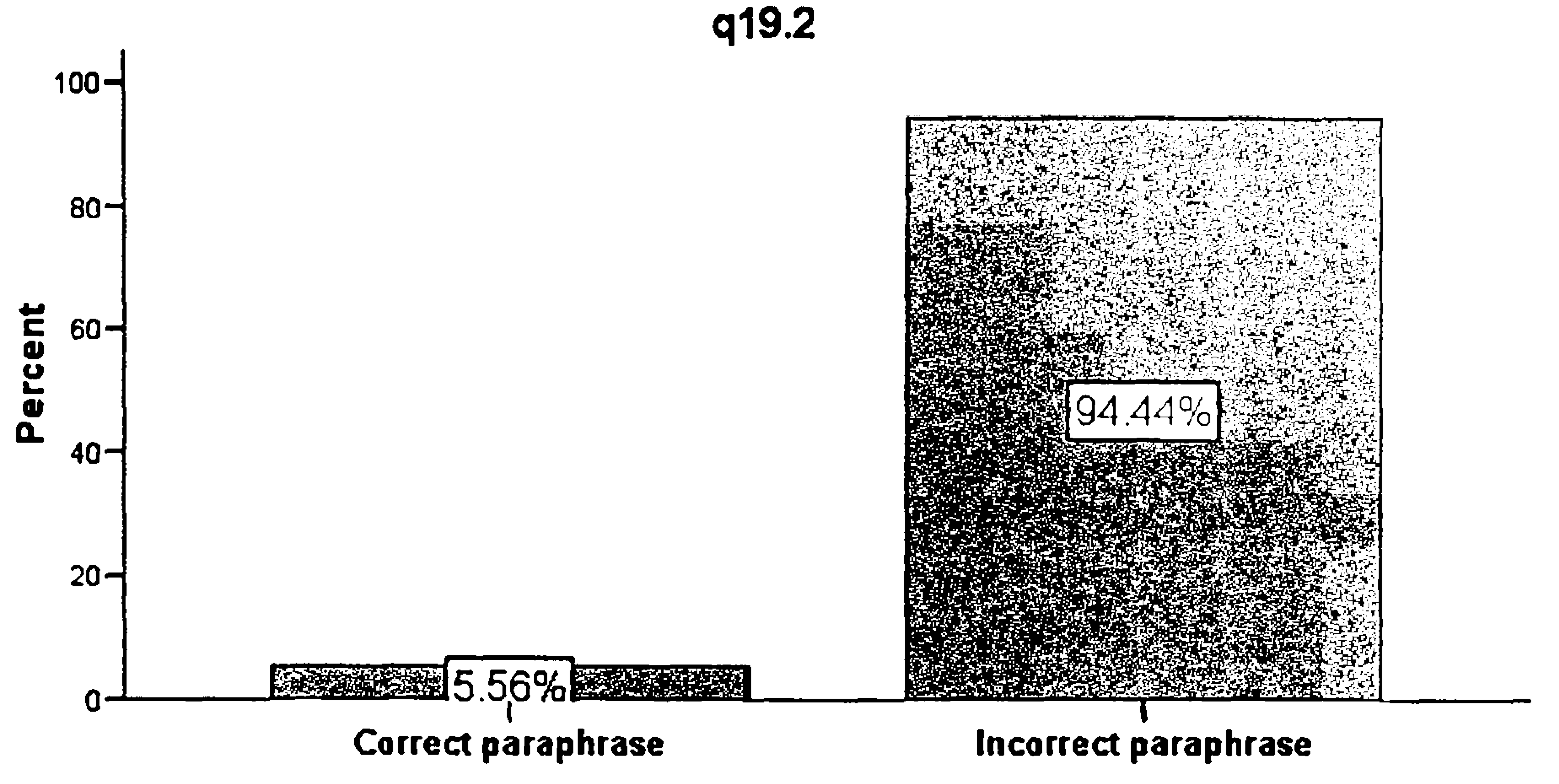


Table 6.56 reveals that 5.56% of those respondents were correct. This percentage constitutes only one respondent who, has a previous knowledge of the Quran. The chart also shows that 94.44% of the respondents were incorrect. Some of them stated that *people of the book* refers to Muslims. They expected that *the book* signifies the Quran. Some others mentioned that they are scholars or anyone who reads books; whereas some respondents thought it describes religious people. Regarding *turn them hindwards,* a good number supposed that it indicates hell. The rest of them either thought it means to take them away or to send them back. This means that the translation shown above is incomprehensible to 95% of the respondents. Table 6.57 shows the reasons that impeded comprehensibility. These reasons were claimed by those respondents who opted for either fairly or completely incomprehensible.

Table 6.57

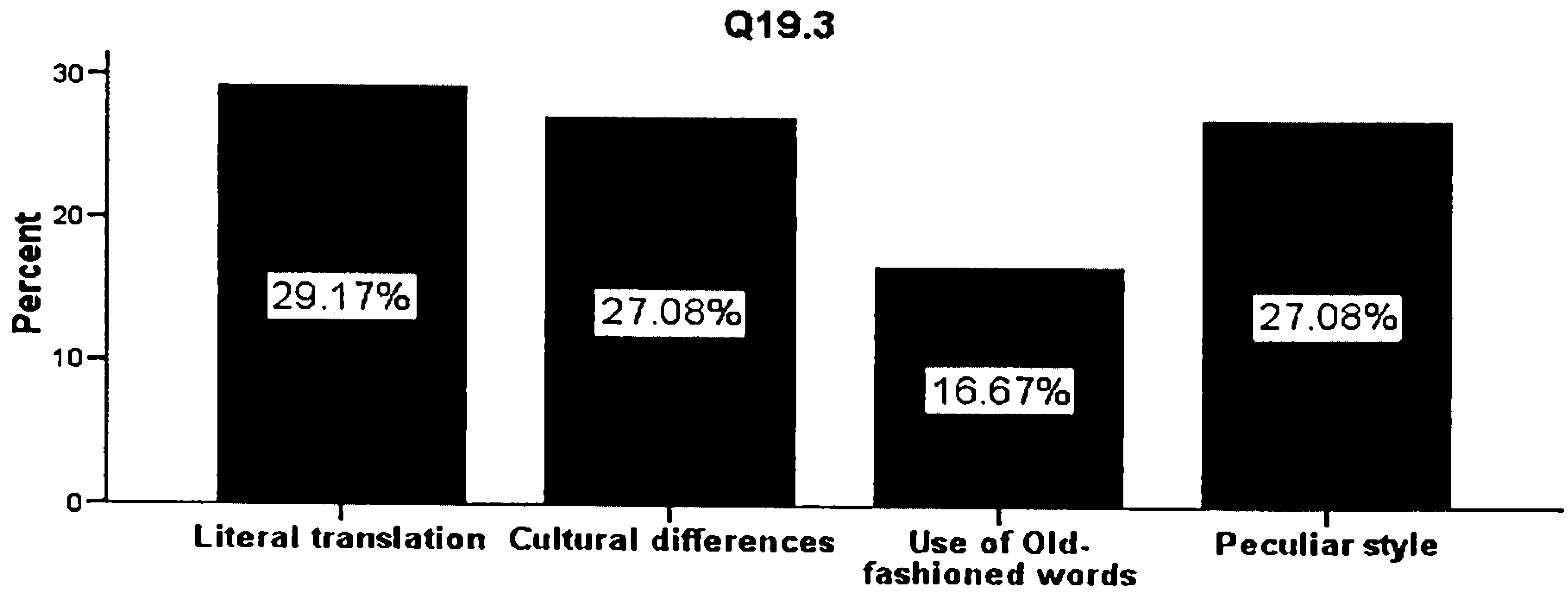


Table 6.57 demonstrates that 29.17% of the respondents opted for literal translation. Both cultural differences and peculiar style were selected by 27.08%. 16.67% chose use of old-fashioned words.

Extract 20

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَةَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنْ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (11) وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا
فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ

"And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), when she said : "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his work, and save me from the people who are Zalimun (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allah). And Maryam (Mary), the daughter of 'Imran who guarded her chastity. And We breathed into (the sleeve of her shirt or her garment) through Our Ruh [I.e. Jibril (Gabriel)], and she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord [I.e. believed in the Words of Allah: "Be!" - and he was; that is 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) as a Messenger of Allah], and (also believed in) His Scriptures, and she was of the Qanitun (i.e. obedient to Allah).

Al-Hilali & Khan (66: 11-12)

This example from Al-Hilali and Khan is the last one included in the questionnaire. The readability of this translation is very difficult. The translators load up the text with both transliteration and details between brackets. As the translators believe that English fails to transfer the same shade of meaning as some Quranic expressions, they prefer to transliterate these terms and then explain them between brackets. In addition, the translators mention the Arab names then follow them with their equivalents in English between brackets. These two weaknesses break the flow of the clauses and phrases of the text and disrupt the concentration of the reader. Consequently, this affects the readability and comprehensibility of the translation. For instance, it would be very difficult for the recipient to follow the sequence of clauses in the second part of the text. They are broken in a confusing way. According to this research, Al-Hilali and Khan's method does not improve the text, but worsens it. Since the translators consider that the English words between brackets can explain the original meaning, it would be better to use these terms without transliteration, particularly given that, the transliterated terms in this verse have ready equivalents in English; they do not have any special shade of meaning. Similarly, since the original terms and names are unfamiliar to the target reader, there is no need to mention them in the target text.

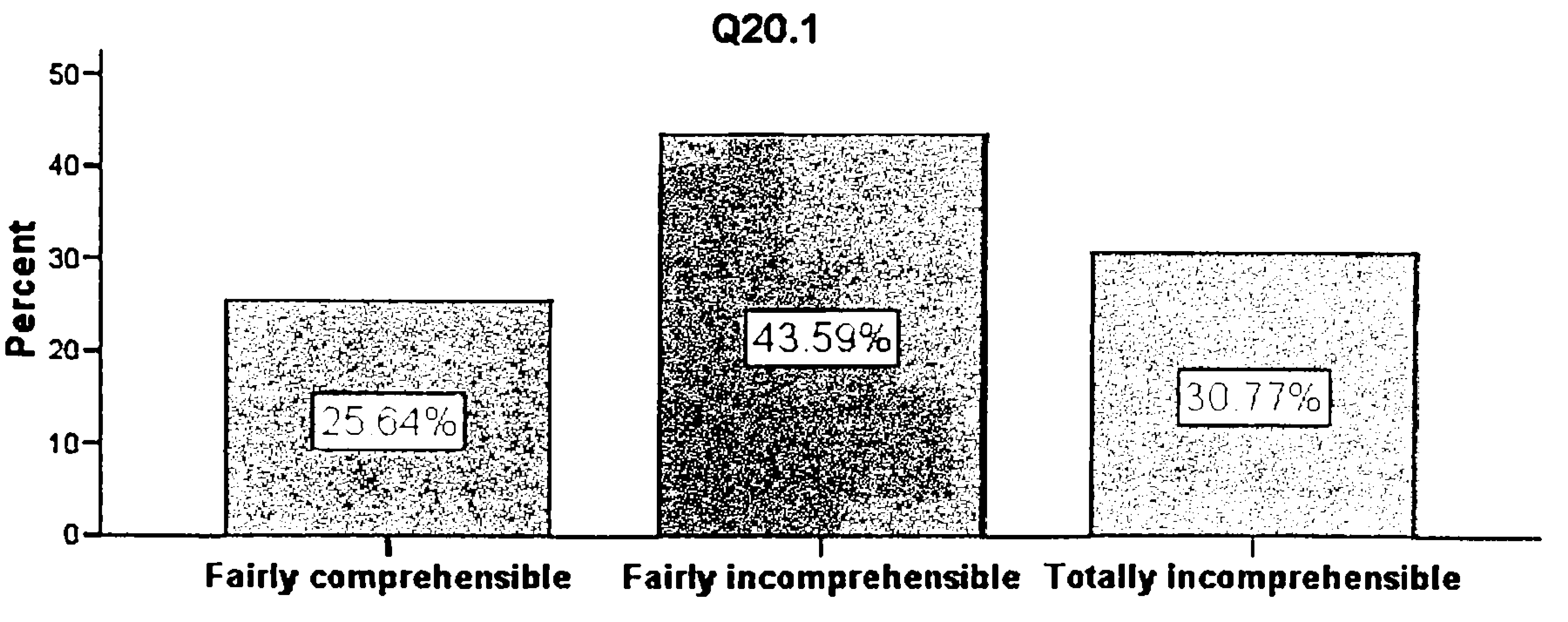
Some of the terms contained in the Quran, such as *fasiqun* and *zalimun* have different shades of meaning. They are mentioned in different verses of the Quran. The connotative meaning of these terms varies from one verse to another according to the context. In all cases, Al-Hilali and Khan transliterate these expressions followed by their different shades of meaning between brackets. This not only impedes the rendering of the precise meaning intended by the verse, but also loads the text with explanations between brackets making the text tedious. In order to render the exact meaning of these terms, the meaning has only to be transferred as it appears in the verse. Only this approach transfers the real sense clearly.

Transliteration and excessive use of brackets are not the only reasons for the incomprehensibility of the above extract. The translation also suffers from peculiar style and unusual orthography. As often, Al-Hilali and Khan transfer both the sequence of the original clauses and the punctuation. They do not transfer the original content in a natural English style. This also affects the readability of the text. Consider the following example. *And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir'aun (Pharaoh).* The translators render the Arabic style. This is

Arabic-specific. Since the original meaning is to be transferred to English readers, the style has to be acceptable in English. The aim is to render the meaning clearly and not to present the same style; the recipient is principally interested in understanding the meaning, not knowing the original style. In other words, the meaning is more important than the style. Before looking at the degree of comprehensibility of the translation discussed above, this research will suggest the following translation.

"God has set forth the wife of Pharaoh as an example to those who believe when she said: "O my lord! Build for me a house close to You in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his mischief, and save me from the people of the evildoers. Consider the example of Mary as well, the daughter of Imran who guarded her chastity, so We breathed Our Spirit into her. She believed in the Words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and she was one of the obedient" (my translation according to the interpretation of Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 6: 346).

Table 6.58

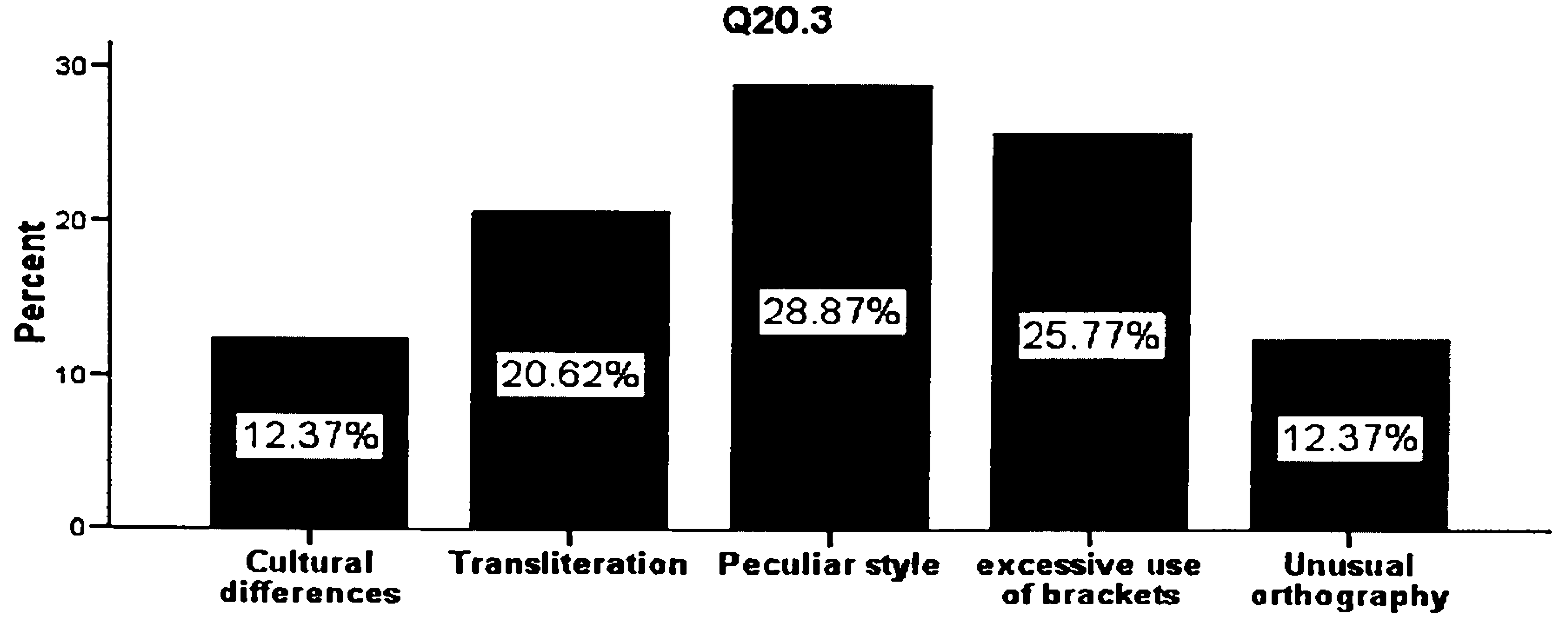


The above chart reveals that Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of the abovementioned verse is fairly incomprehensible to 43.59% of the respondents, and totally incomprehensible to 30.77%. It also indicates that 25.64% of the respondents supposed they understand the content fairly well. None of the respondents believed they grasped the content completely. As this passage is fairly long, and in order to avoid causing the respondents bordom, this research did not ask the respondents who selected fairly comprehensible to paraphrase it. So, this research is not sure whether they are accurate or not. Whereas some of them commented that the passage is not

contextualised properly, others noted that the breaks towards the end would cause an English reader to stop reading. Others noted that the phrase *And We breathed into (the sleeve of her shirt or her garment) through Our Ruh [I.e. Jibril (Gabriel)]*, which is mistranslated here, is senseless.

After this research has considered the intelligibility of the text mentioned above, it will look at the factors that cause incomprehensibility. Table 6.59 explains this.

Table 6.59

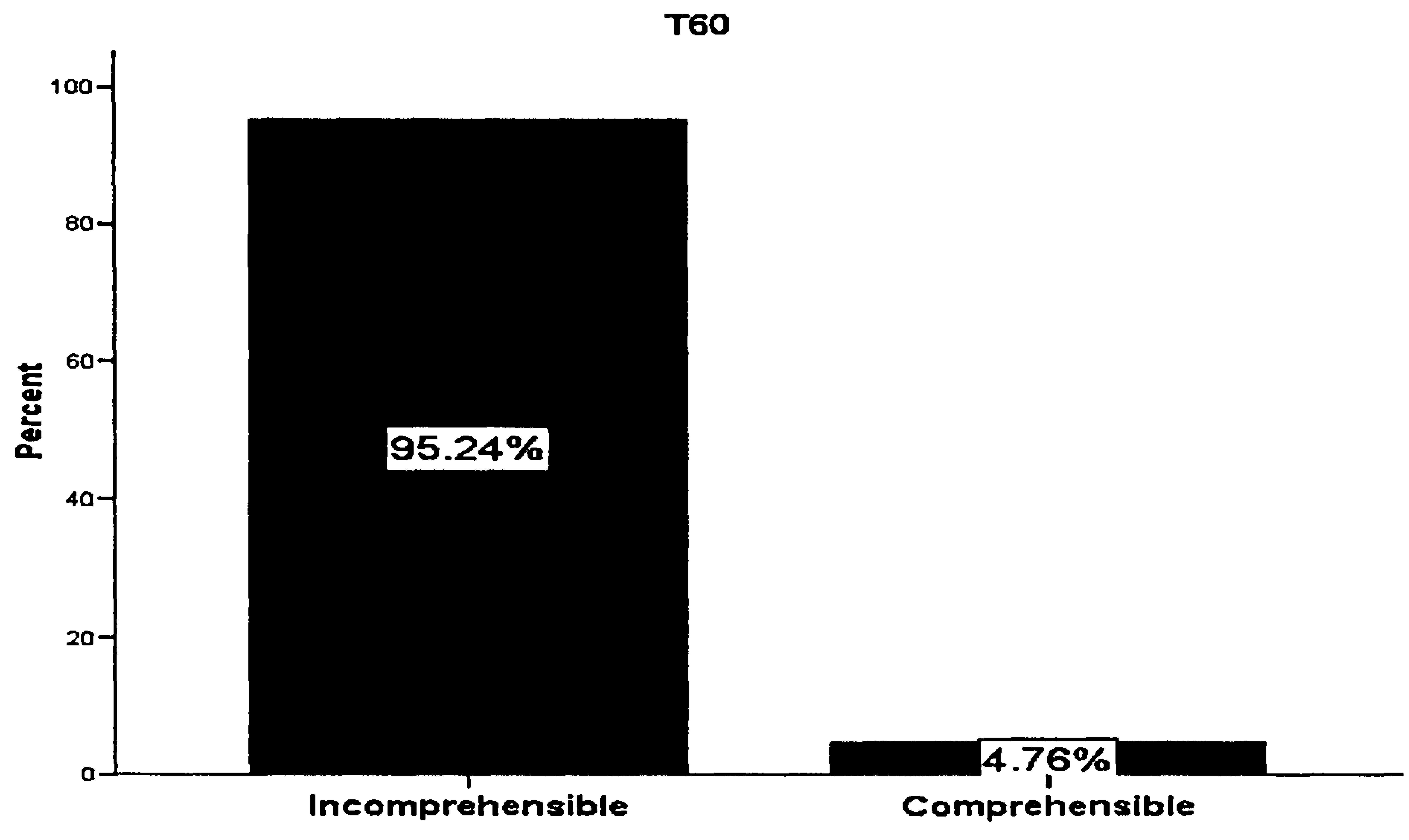


According to those respondents who selected both fairly and completely incomprehensible, table 6.59 indicates that peculiar style is the main factor which affects the readability of the translation as 28.87% selected it. It also demonstrates that 25.77% chose excessive use of brackets as the second main reason. Transliteration, the third reason, was selected by 20.62%, while unusual orthography and cultural differences were selected equally by 12.37%. Regarding cultural difference, some respondents opted for this reason as a consequence of transliteration. Since they did not understand the transliterated terms, they probably thought that these terms are Arabic-specific elements.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at and analyzed the results of the questionnaire in an attempt to find out to what extent the translations of the meaning of the Quran into English that were considered were comprehensible. It has also looked at the possible reasons for incomprehensibility claimed by the respondents. As seen, the questionnaire considered twenty examples chosen from the three versions in question. Regarding comprehensibility, the results of the questionnaire showed that the given examples, which were not the worst in the three translations, were incomprehensible to 95.24% of the respondents. The extracts were comprehensible only to 4.76%. Table 6.60 shows this result.

Table 6.60



As seen in table 6.60, the overwhelming majority of the respondents did not comprehend the given examples. Only a few understood some extracts. Even some of those who understood some extracts guessed the meaning and were not certain about the real meaning. It is worth mentioning that those who understood the content understood it because they have a previous knowledge of the Quran, though, even they only comprehended 50% of the extracts. If they are excluded from the questionnaire, incomprehensibility is 100%. These results verify the hypothesis set out in this

research that some verses of some translations of the Quran into English are incomprehensible to the target reader.

It was mentioned earlier that respondents of the questionnaire are highly educated people. A large number of them are academics, most of whom teach languages. This means that they are experts in analyzing and understanding vague texts since they teach foreign students and these students are not always good at expressing themselves. So, if these well-educated people, including numerous academics who are professionals in dealing with texts were not able to analyse and understand the translations, this means that the three translations in question suffer from serious flaws that impede comprehensibility. This chapter has shown some possible reasons for incomprehensibility claimed by respondents. These reasons will be discussed in chapter seven.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

Chapter Six showed that the results of the questionnaire proved that the three translations of the meaning of the Quran into English being considered fail to transfer the content of the original into the target language in a comprehensible way. Questionnaire respondents who are well educated academics and non-academics had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the given examples. The degree of incomprehensibility was very high, with 95.24% failing to understand the content of the overall sample.

The results of the questionnaire have also revealed a very serious issue; namely, that the unclear meaning in the target language led some respondents to understand or guess meanings which are completely different from the original. This is a serious distortion. The beauty and wisdom of the original are lost and misunderstood in the target text. For instance, some of the respondents understood Ali's translation "*Your women are a tillage for you, so come unto your tillage as you wish*", as allowing Muslims to use and manipulate their women, whereas this verse calls on men to respect and give pleasure to their wives. This verse is metaphoric. The inaccurate translation results in the loss of this beautiful metaphor in the target language and also the loss of the genuine meaning. Moreover, when the target reader does not comprehend the meaning in his own language, as the rendered text is not clear, he thinks that the original is similarly unclear. This reader will then have an experience of the Quran as senseless hence affecting the original negatively.

This chapter will look at the reasons that generate incomprehensibility and will also show how each reason affects the content. Afterwards, it will attempt to establish some methods to free the translations from these shortcomings. However, the questionnaire respondents suggested seven reasons for incomprehensibility. The three translations suffer from these seven shortcomings but not each translation suffers from all of them. One translation might suffer from a particular

shortcoming, while another does not. There are some shared issues which affect all of the three translations, but these do not cause incomprehensibility to the same degree. This chapter will explain these shortcomings in detail, starting with the most common and problematic weakness claimed by respondents, then moving progressively to the least significant. Table 7.1 shows the reasons for the incomprehensibility of the three translations in general.

Table 7.1

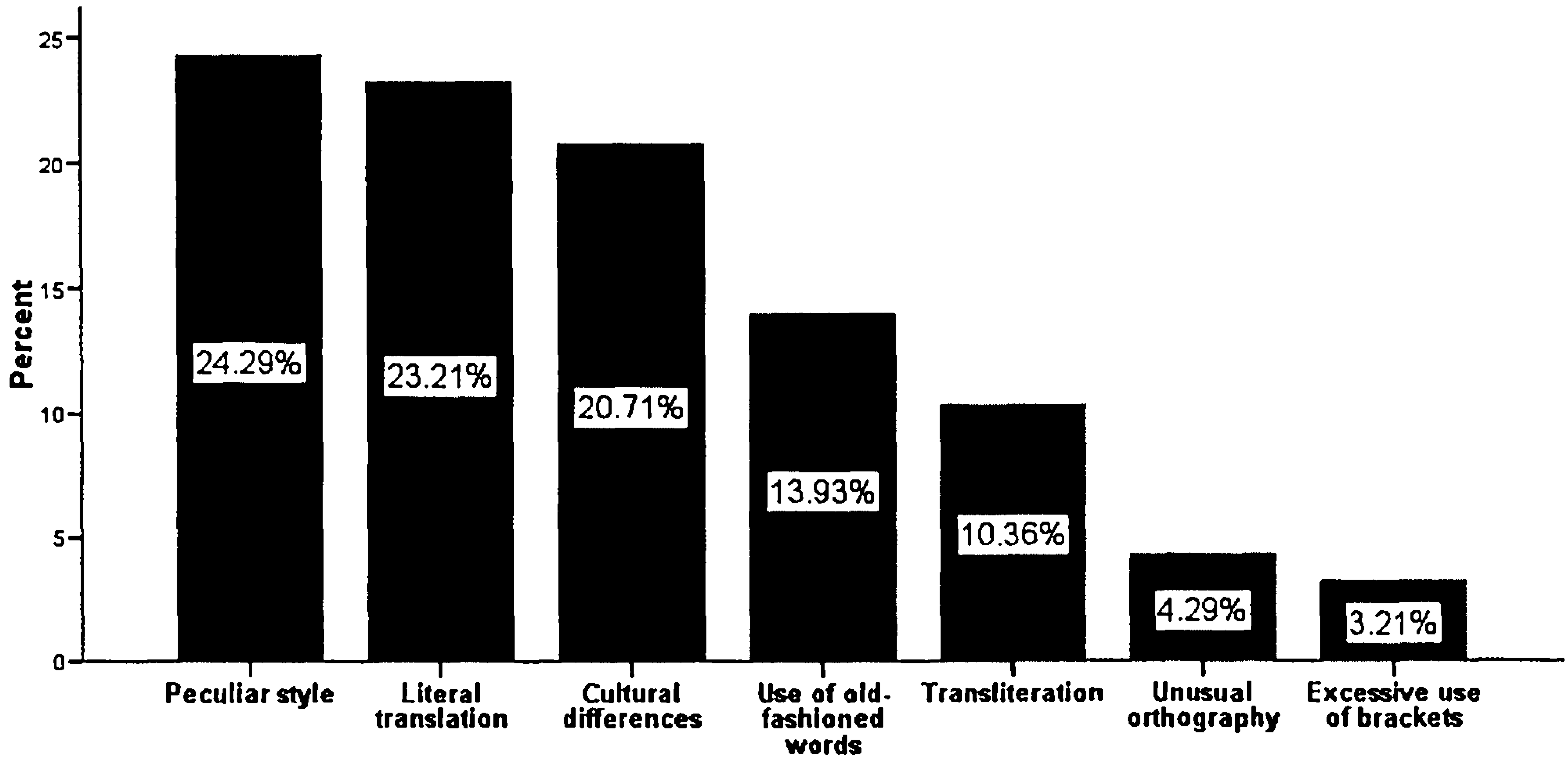


Table 7.1 demonstrates that, according to the questionnaire respondents, peculiar style was the principal reason that affected comprehensibility. The three translations in question all suffer from this shortcoming. It constitutes 24.29% of the negative effect on comprehensibility. Literal translation is the second main reason affecting comprehensibility at 23.21%. Cultural differences, the third key cause, were selected by 20.71% and then the use of old-fashioned words by 13.93%. Transliteration was chosen by 10.36%, unusual orthography and punctuation by 4.29% and excessive use of brackets by 3.21%.

As noted above, the shortcomings and the degree to which they affect comprehensibility vary from one translation to another. In other words, not all the three translations in question suffer from the same problem and to the same degree. The following tables display the shortcomings of each translation as identified by the questionnaire respondents and show to what extent each weakness affects intelligibility.

Table 7.2

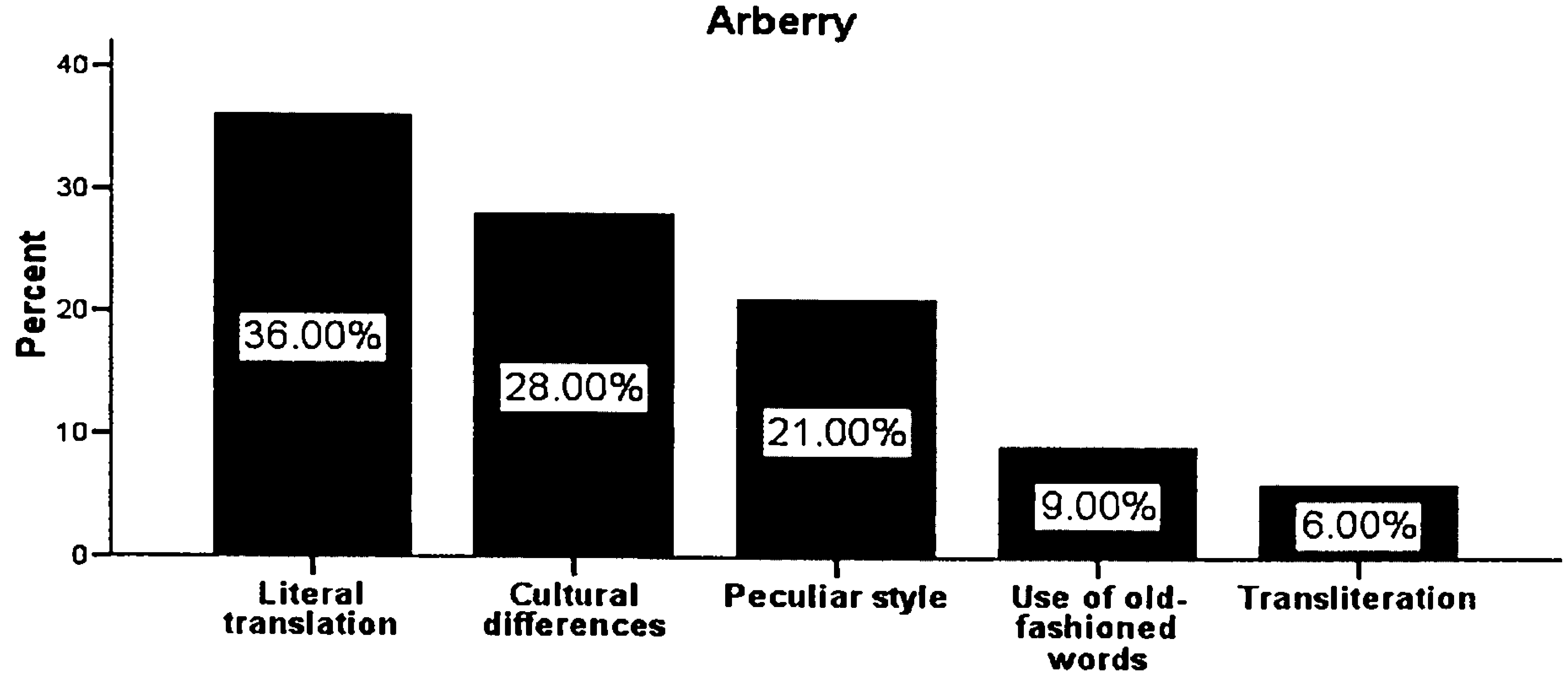


Table 7.2 shows that literal translation is the most important element affecting comprehensibility in Arberry's translation. This weakness influences the clarity of the text in 36% of cases. Cultural differences are the second main reason affecting the text at 28% then peculiar style at 21%, use of old-fashioned words at 9%, and finally transliteration at 6%. To sum up, literal translation, cultural differences and peculiar style are the major elements affecting the understanding of Arberry's translation.

The following table lists the weaknesses in Ali's translation as identified by respondents.

Table 7.3

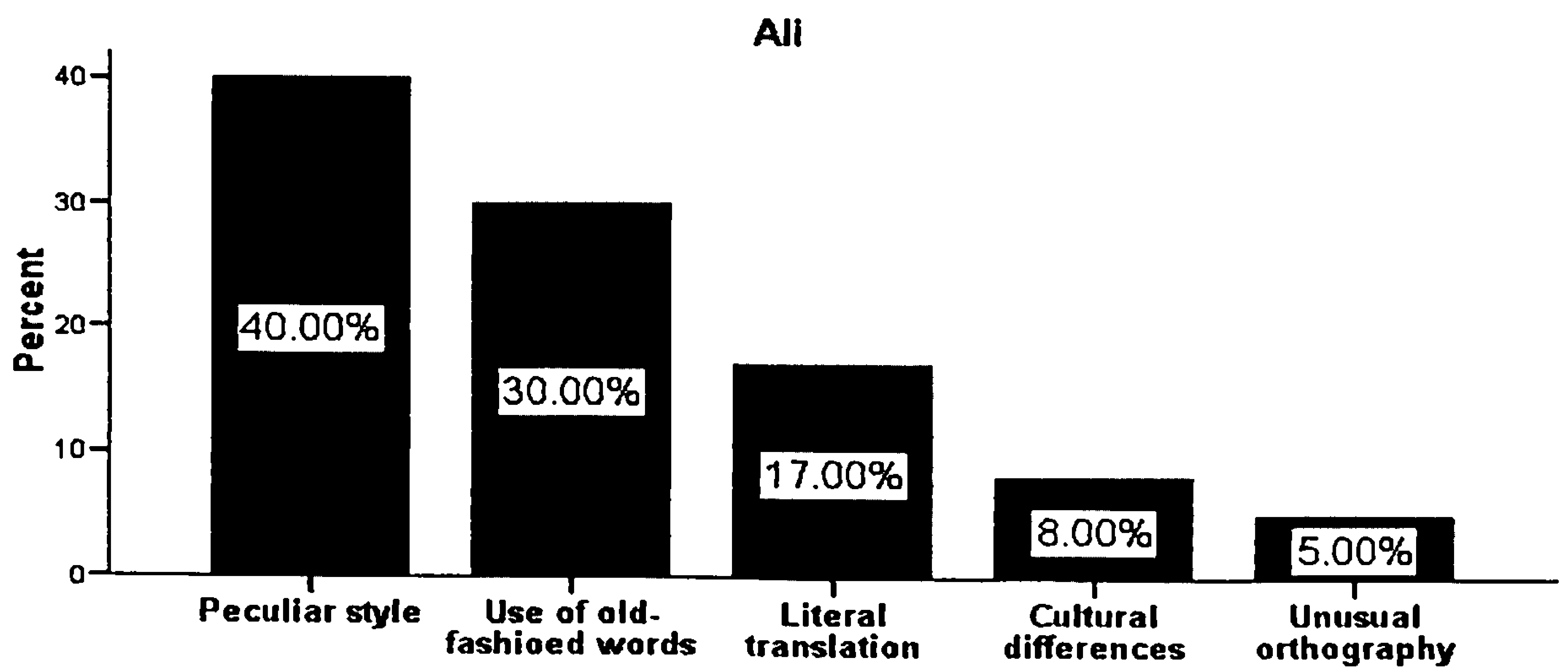


Table 6.3 shows that peculiar style forms the major obstacle that hinders the understanding of Ali's translation. It represents 40% of the elements that impede comprehensibility. Use of old-fashioned words, the second most common weakness, comprises 30%, literal translation 17%, cultural differences 8%, and finally unusual orthography and punctuation 5%. Therefore, peculiar style, use of old-fashioned words, and literal translation are the main shortcomings hindering the intelligibility of Ali's translation.

The following table demonstrates the factors which impede the understanding of Al-Hilali and Khan's translation as claimed by respondents.

Table 7.4

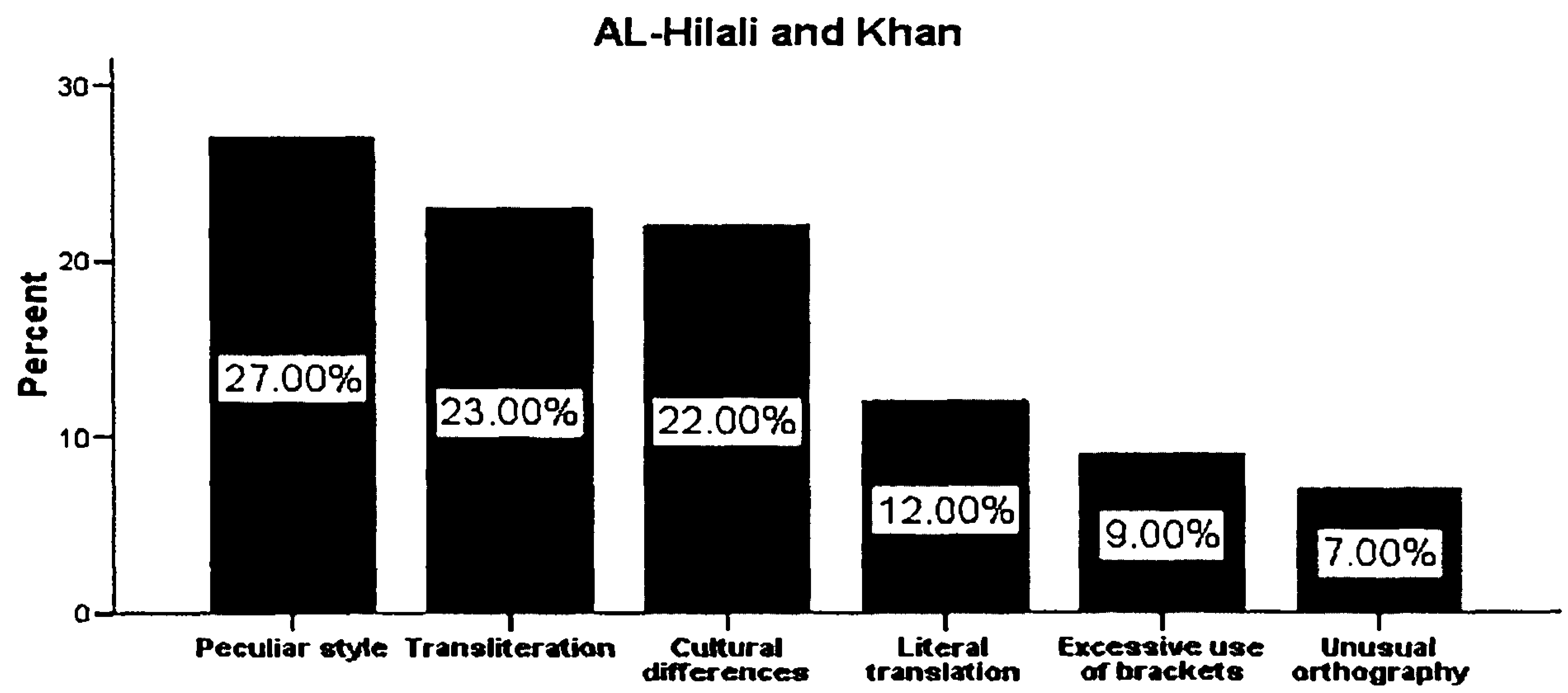


Table 7.4 shows that peculiar style is the key shortcoming affecting the intelligibility of Al-Hliali and Khan's translation. This constitutes 27% of the elements that cause incomprehensibility. Transliteration, the second main factor, affects the text at 23%, then cultural differences at 22%, literal translation at 12%, excessive use of brackets at 9%, and finally unusual orthography and punctuation at 7%. So, respondents think that peculiar style, transliteration and cultural differences are the major reasons that result in unintelligibility in Al-Hilali and Khan's translation.

After presenting the factors which affected the respondents' comprehension of the three translations of the meaning of the Quran into English, this chapter will shed light on why and

how these factors led respondents to fail to understand the content. It will start by discussing the main weakness according to table 7.1 then move on to discuss the less significant ones. It will show also to what extent the effect of each shortcoming varies from one translation to another.

7.2 Reasons for incomprehensibility

7.2.1 Style

According to the questionnaire respondents, peculiar style forms the central difficulty which impedes comprehensibility. This is because the original text is rendered in styles which are difficult to follow, foreign-sounding and unattractive. The target style suffers from alien word order, loss of coherence and cohesion, and long sentences with no proper punctuation or relative clauses. These elements result in an unreadable style, generating confusing and unclear meanings.

Arabic sentences are usually long and are composed of relatively long clauses and phrases which are arranged in a logically hierarchical fashion. These various dependent clauses and phrases are linked by specific relative structures and co-referential elements. In addition, Arabic has stylistic and syntactic properties which are language-specific and not be shared by other languages. The post-posing and preposing of certain constituents in the Quranic discourse has a special communicative function. Preposing is a syntactic operation that places one or more constituents at the beginning of the sentence for stylistic purposes. Post-posing is a syntactic operation that places one or more constituents at the end of the sentence. Syntax and style in the Quran stand shoulder to shoulder to produce the desired communicative goal, whose meaning would not have been achieved by ordinary simple syntactic patterns (Abdul-Raof 2005: 165). The sentences are thus readable and the meaning is very clear. Since Arabic and English have very different linguistic and stylistic features, rendering the Quranic style directly into English produces an alien style. Hence, unnatural punctuation and relative clauses, preposing and post posing disrupt the flow of the sentence so that the target reader cannot know where the sentence starts and where it ends and cannot see which phrase or clause depends on which. This makes the text incoherent and, consequently, it disturbs the concentration of the reader; he reads a text with no obvious meaning. Benjamin (1992: 79) rightly warns that "a literal rendering of syntax completely demolishes the theory of reproduction of meaning and is a direct threat to comprehensibility".

Style affects comprehensibility more in Ali's translation than in those of Al-Hilali and Khan and Arberry. Ali retains the original style in English as much as possible though the original form is not natural in the target language. This is because he (1989: 7) believes that "the rhythm, music, and exalted tone of the original should be reflected in the English interpretation". He adheres to the Arabic structure more than the English one and this spoils the target text. For instance, in some cases he translates the absolute object مفعول مطلق directly even though English hardly uses this construction. He translates the verse وينصرك الله نصرا عزيزا into *and that Allah may help thee with powerful help.* No English reader would find this construction acceptable. Use of the verbal noun together with its corresponding verb is characteristic of Arabic and has the purpose of emphasis. English style does not involve the same shade of meaning. Moreover, Ali presents the translation in a poetic manner, which is manifested in the many poems which he inserts in various places in most of the chapters. It is also manifested in the arrangement of the lines of the translation such that every line begins with a capital letter, and in the splitting of a construction into two halves to maintain the poetic format. Although as noted, he (1989: 7) states in his introduction to his translation that "the rhythm, music, and exalted tone of the original should be reflected in the English interpretation", the translation is not poetic at all because it lacks appropriate rhythm, rhyme, and meter which are the traditional essentials of poetry in English. It is worth mentioning that Ali's attempt to translate the Quran in a poetic manner is against the soul of the Quran because it is not poetry. The attempt to approximate the stylistic qualities of the Quran in the target language not only affects comprehensibility, but also sacrifices much of the meaning, as the Quranic style has a special communicative function.

The style of Al-Hilali and Khan is no clearer than that of Ali. An observer, or rather, any researcher in the field of translating the meaning of the Quran into English can easily realize that Al-Hilali and Khan did not genuinely translate the meaning of the Quran. I believe they merely updated the vocabulary of Ali's translation while retaining the same style; they just freed the translation from the odd rhythm and rhyme. They also tried to clarify some cultural elements by using, or rather loading the text with, brackets, as well as transliterating some Quranic terms where they believed that the translation fails to transfer the specific emotive overtones they possess. The result is a worse piece of work than that of Ali. This technique made the target text even more difficult to understand. The style is odd because clauses and phrases are not properly linked. Punctuation, relatives, and conjunctions are not used in the most appropriate way. This

awkward style hinders the transfer of any obvious meaning.

Questionnaire respondents pointed out that Arberry's style is much better than Al-Hilali and Khan's and Ali's. However, some translated verses suffer from an awkward style that affects comprehensibility. If Arberry's translation is compared to other works, we find that his translation of the meaning of the Quran in terms of style is felt to be quite attractive. In addition, his vocabulary, to some extent, is modern and elegant. Questionnaire respondents believed that Arberry's translation suffered from peculiar style because they did not understand the meaning of some parts of the text. Indeed, literal translation and cultural voids made some parts of the target text vague. This made the respondents deem that the style affected the clarity of the meaning. This is not to say that Arberry's style is perfect. It suffers from instances of awkwardness in places but if his translation were freed from some of its shortcomings, such as literal translation and cultural voids, his style would be sound.

The following table shows to what degree each translation suffers from peculiarity of style.

Table 7.5

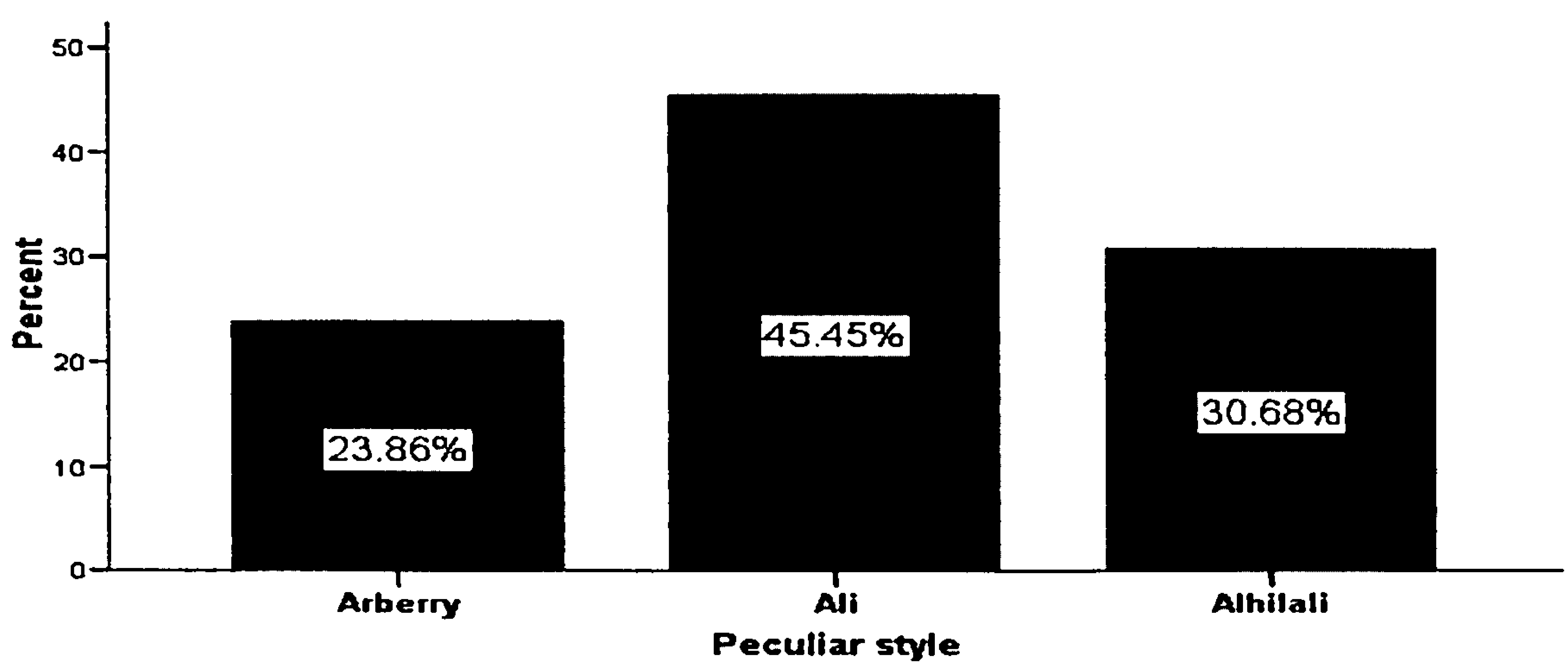


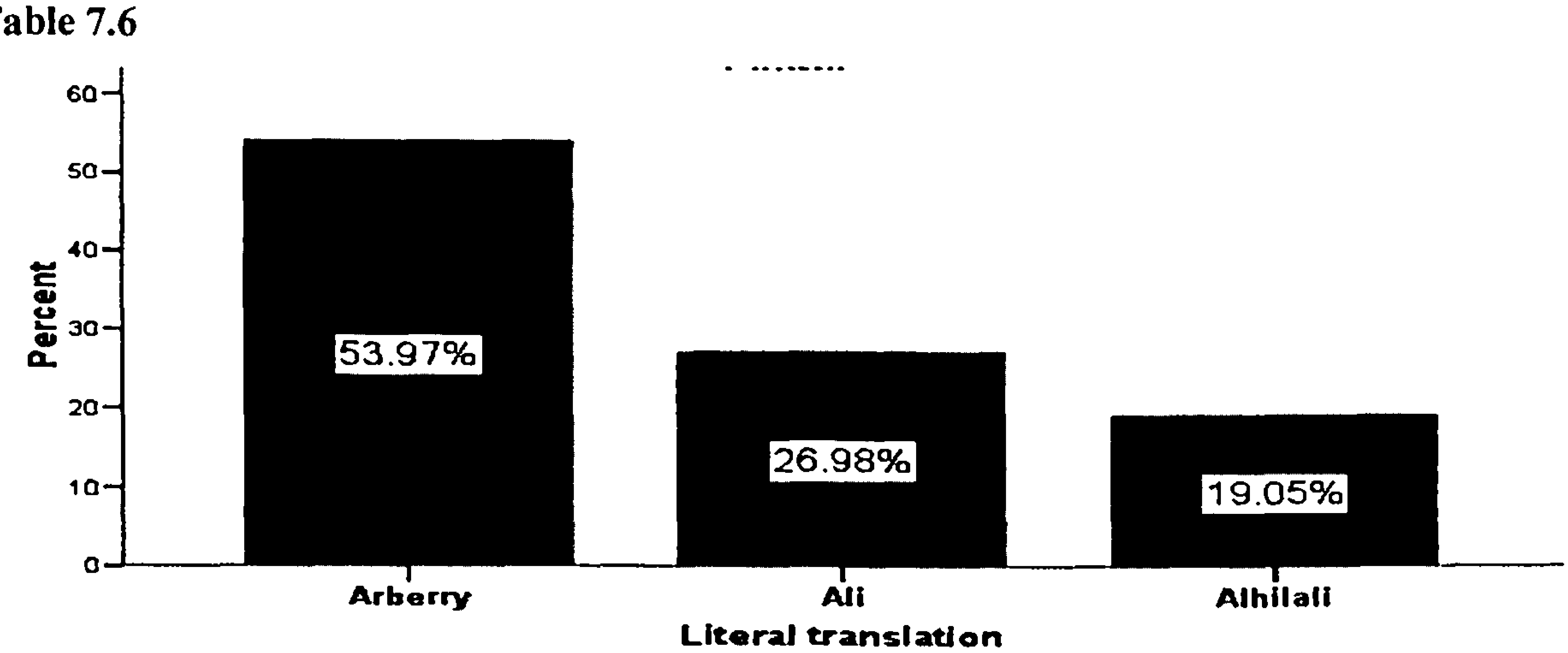
Table 7.1 showed that style affects comprehensibility in the three translations at 24.29%. Table 7.5 shows that Ali's work comprises 45.45% of this overall percentage, Al-Hilali and Khan 30.68%, and Arberry 23.86%. This demonstrates that Ali's style is the most inferior while Arberry's is the best. Al-Hilali and Khan's style stands in the middle.

7.2.2 Literal translation

Literal translation is considered by the questionnaire respondents to be the second main reason affecting comprehensibility. Literal translation of some words, idioms and fixed expressions in the Quran fails to render the intended meaning of the original ones clearly into English. This is because in some cases, the translators, especially Arberry, render only the denotative meanings of these linguistic features. They transfer them as they were found in the dictionary. Since the connotative meaning of a word in Arabic is often not the same as that of an English word almost having almost the same denotative meaning, the literally rendered meaning neither transfers the genuine meaning nor does it match the general content of the text. The words are English but they do not relay an obvious message. Consequently, the reader fails to grasp the meaning. Dickins et al. (2002: 97) warn that "in translation, lexical loss is very common, and this arises from the fact that exact synonymy between ST words and TT words, is relatively rare". They (ibid) add that "meanings are not found exclusively in the words listed individually in the dictionary". Lexical loss then results in a text that lacks clear meaning, badly affecting intelligibility.

Literal translation is more common in Arberry than in Ali and Al-Hilali and Khan. Table 7.1 showed that literal translation affects the comprehensibility of the three translations in question by 23.21%. The following table, Table 7.6, demonstrates that Arberry's translation constitutes 53.97% of this overall percentage, Ali's 26.98%, and Al-Hilali and Khan's 19.05%.

Table 7.6



In order to convey the meaning of the Quran accurately, the translator should have a good knowledge of the subject. He has to have a complete understanding of the denotative and connotative meaning of every expression in each verse along with a good knowledge of Arabic grammar. As Arberry lacks this, he translates only the denotative meaning, or rather, he produces a word-for-word translation. Literal translation is the central factor that impedes understanding of his translation. It provides two further factors that hinder comprehensibility. Either it creates a cultural void or a senseless text. For instance, translating المسجد الأقصى *Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa* literally as “the Further Mosque”, ام القرى *Umm Al-Qura* as "Mother of Cities",أهل الكتاب *Ahl Al-Kitab* as "People of the Book" causes a cultural void. When the target reader reads these elements, he will not understand them as he does not have prior knowledge of them. In addition, the translation does not give any explanatory information about these elements. If these identities were accommodated in the target language, the reader would recognize them. Similarly, translating the idiom ما ملكت أيمانكم *ma malakat aymanuhum* literally as "what your right hand owns" and إرم ذات العماد *Irama dhat il imad* as "Iram of the pillars" results in a vague, or rather meaningless text. Consequently, the target reader will fail to understand the content.

It seems that Arberry is affected by pre-modern Bible translators who believed that good translation involves producing the most literal translation possible in the most readable way. They believe that the translator has no right to translate the original text connotatively. Therefore, he tries to represent the exact words of the original text avoiding any interpretation on his part. In most cases he tries to transfer only synonyms. For example, he translates the verse ويضرب الله الامثال للناس لعلهم يتذكرون (14: 25) as *God strikes similitudes for men; haply they will remember*. He transfers ويضرب الله الامثال literally as *God strikes similitudes* instead of "God gives examples". This translation neither transfers the exact meaning nor does it express a meaningful text. The target reader will fail to understand that to *strike similitudes* means to give examples.

Literal translation also affects the intelligibility of Ali's translation. In some cases, Ali renders some expressions literally, generating either a cultural void or a senseless text. This confuses the reader and hence they will fail to comprehend the meaning. For example, he translates the idiom أهل الكتاب *Ahl alkitab* wherever it exists in the Quran literally as *People of the Book.* This translation does not transfer an obvious meaning. The target reader might interpret this clause in two different ways such as "scholars" or "Muslims" and this is what happened in the

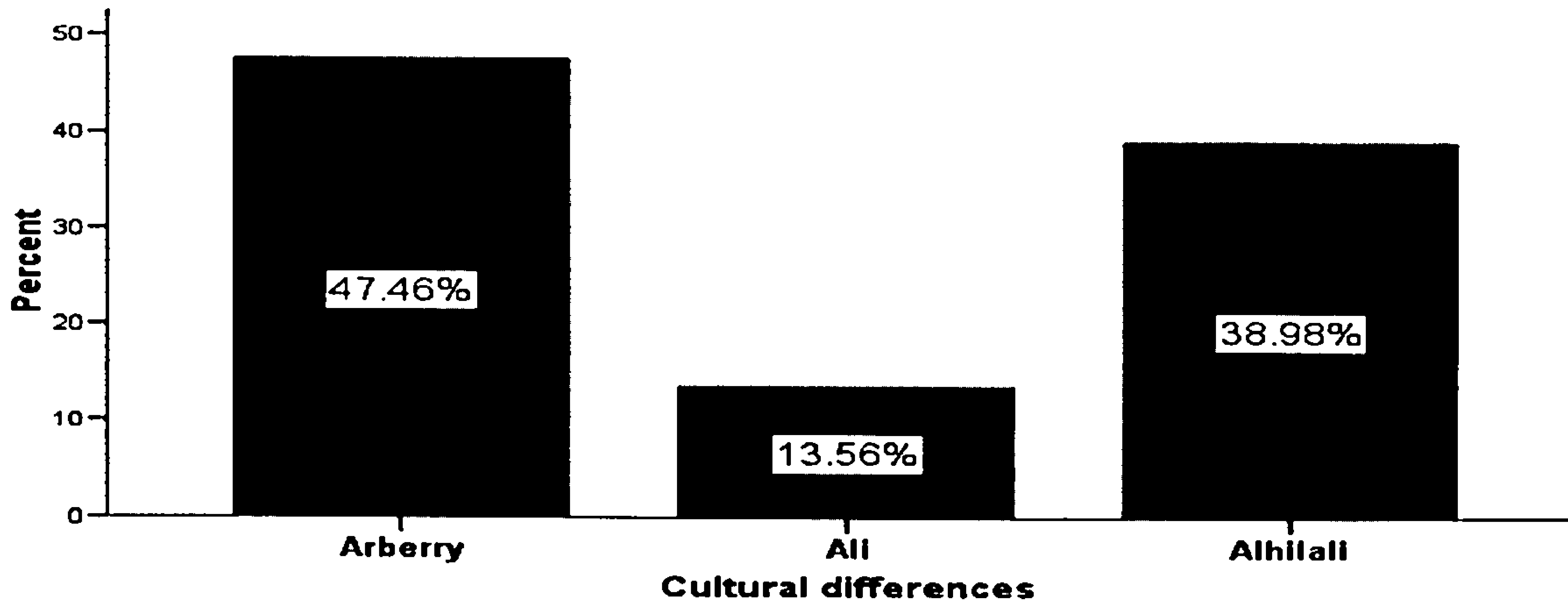
questionnaire. In the Quran, it stands only for Christians and Jews. In some cases, Ali translates some words literally and incorrectly where he does not seem to really recognize the true shades of meaning on the grounds of not being a native speaker of Arabic. For instance, he translates the word فأصبح in verse (28: 18) as *in the morning he was* instead of "he became".

Despite Al-Hilali and Khan's attempt to avoid literal rendering, their translation contains some examples where literal translation affects the transfer of a comprehensible meaning. For instance, they transfer the verse وإنه في أم الكتاب لدينا لعلي حكيم (43: 4) literally into English as *And verily, it (this Quran) is in the Mother of the Book (i.e. Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz) with Us, indeed exalted, full of wisdom.* They render أم الكتاب literally as *Mother of the Book,* thus transferring no obvious meaning. They then transliterate the intended meaning of this expression between brackets in order to facilitate comprehensibility. Neither literal translation nor transliteration conveys any understandable meaning to the target reader. In order to grasp this peculiar translation, the target reader needs to have prior knowledge of what *Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz* (اللوح المحفوظ) means. The only reader who can understand this text is an Arab reader. *Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuz* means Preserved Tablets. In brief, literal translation leads to confusion, obscurity, and indeterminacy. Abdul-Raof (2005: 29) stresses this by arguing that "literal translation of religious texts can confuse the target reader and provide wrong socio-cultural presuppositions".

7.2.3 Cultural differences

According to the questionnaire respondents, culturalal references constituate the third main reason for incomprehensibility. As table 6.1 showed, culture differences account for 20.21% of all cases of intelligibility. Table 7.7 demonstrates that Arberry makes up 47.46% of this 20.21%, Al-Hilali and Khan 38.46%, and Ali 13.56%.

Table 7.7



Generally speaking, culture is often said to pose the most difficult problem in translation (Dickins 2005: 29, Nida 2001: 27). This is because each culture has its own specific traditions. In addition, there is a distinction between the denotative meaning of words and phrases and their associated connotations. The process of transmitting cultural elements through translation is a complicated and vital task due to the fact that culture is a complex collection of experiences. These include history, social structure, religion, traditional customs and everyday practices. Translators of the meaning of the Quran face an even bigger challenge in transferring the meaning clearly and accurately because they deal with terms and aspects of culture which are highly emotive. Translators encounter a problem in both the analysis of these terms and aspects and in finding the closest or best equivalent in the target language to conjure up the same image. Moreover, there are practices in the Islamic religion which cannot be easily explained to the target reader because they are alien to them.

In order to tackle this problem, some translators preferred to import Quranic cultural expressions through either transliteration or literal rendering, believing this method would convey a comprehensible meaning in the target text. In both cases, the translations fail to achieve their goal. Instead of yielding culturally comprehensible texts, they produce texts which are linguistically unreadable, and culturally unintelligible.

According to the questionnaire respondents, Arberry was the worst in handling cultural elements clearly. Indeed, Arberry's translation suffers dramatically from cultural voids. He fails to tackle this aspect due to the fact that his knowledge of the Quran is linguistically and culturally lacking.

In terms of culture, Arberry was neither a Muslim nor did he live in a practicing Muslim community. He did not live the daily Muslim life; he neither practised Muslim rituals nor behaviour, nor did he watch Muslims practicing these rituals in order to become familiar with them. Therefore, he was unconscious of very many Muslim cultural elements. In translating the meaning of the Quran, as Arberry was unaware of the Quranic cultural aspects, he treated these terms linguistically and picked them out from the dictionary. The result was a fairly literal translation. The use of denotative meaning not only failed to render the correct meaning, but also generated English words with no obvious content. Arabic names are frequently nouns and adjectives which have a lexicalized meaning in Arabic dictionaries while names of foreign origin are delexicalized. Therefore, when Arberry did not find some of the cultural elements in the dictionary, he transliterated them, relaying no meaning.

Regarding Al-Hilali and Khan, it seems they believe that the theological, ritual, and abstract moral concepts in the Quran have highly sensitive overtones. They believe these concepts are Arabic-specific and so English fails to render the same meaning. In addition, the Quran contains some practical rituals and elements of material culture that cannot be rendered into English because they are linguistically void. Consequently, they transliterate these components into English. In some cases, they add explanatory information between brackets to illustrate the meaning and in others they do not. In both cases, they fail to render an intelligible meaning. They overload the text with transliteration and explanatory information between brackets, making reading very difficult.

Unlike Al-Hilali and Khan, Ali transfers the connotative meaning of the abstract moral concept and, in most cases he succeeds in domesticating theological and ritual expressions. Therefore, the cultural void is lessened in his translation. However, his rendition is loaded with cultural elements which are incomprehensible to the target reader. This is simply because Ali, in some cases, renders only the literal meaning of these elements. A case in point for our discussion is transferring the cultural element *Al-Bayt* (البيت) in the verse وإذ جعلنا البيت مثابة للناس وأمنا (2: 125). Ali renders this term literally into English as "the House". *Al-Bayt* is one of the Ka'ba's names. This is well known to every Muslim because the Ka'ba is the most sacred place in Islam, while this translation appears alien to the target reader and hence he will fail to understand it. The target reader knows this place by the name of Mecca. Hence, if Ali refers to this place as the "Ka'ba in

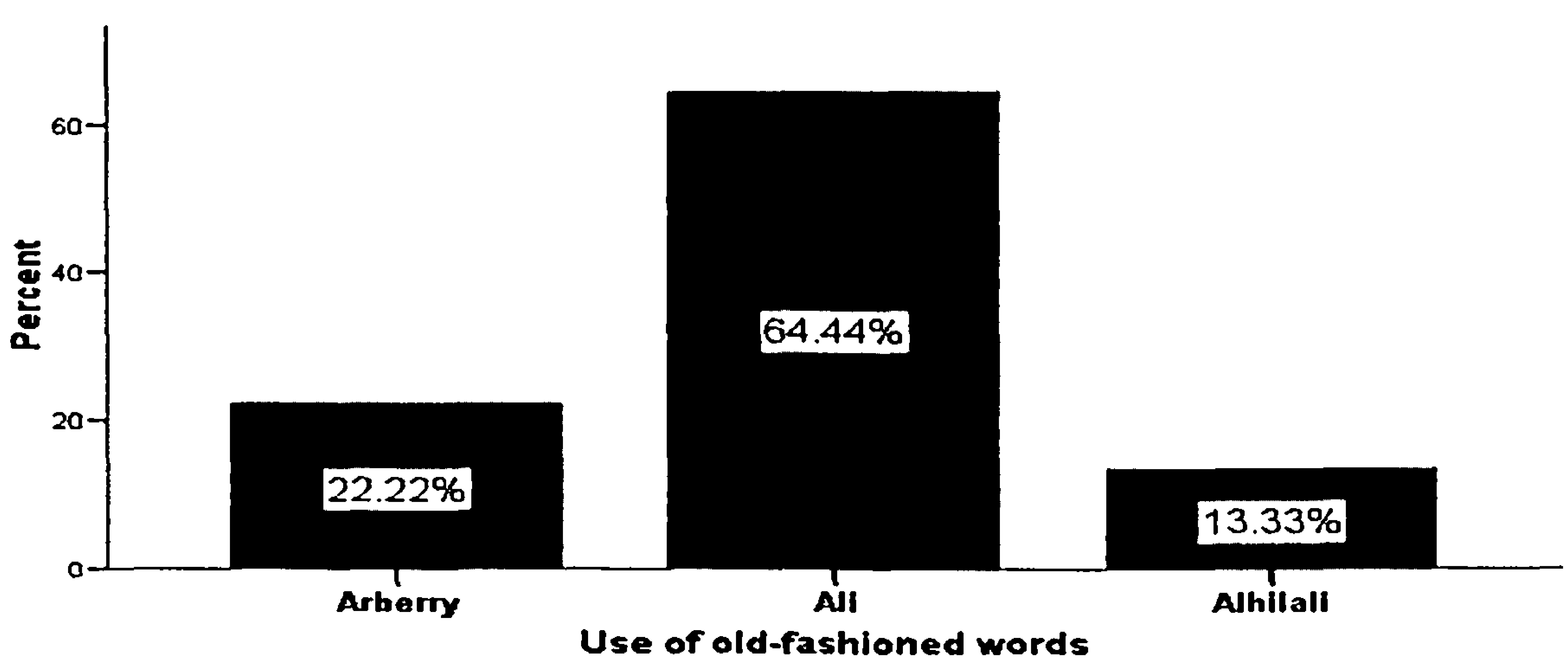
Mecca", the translation would be more comprehensible.

An understanding of some verses which contain cultural elements cannot be achieved unless the reader is aware of these components. If the text fails to explain these aspects clearly, the reader will struggle to comprehend the meaning. For this reason, the questionnaire respondents failed to comprehend the general meaning of some examples. These extracts contained Quranic cultural aspects which were alien to them. This is because the translators failed to tackle this problem by making the cultural aspect clear in the target language. The discussion above demonstrates two key reasons for hindering the transfer of cultural elements; first, literal translation, whether this is a result of a lack of knowledge on the part of the translator in one of the two cultures and languages, or as a technique adopted in order to remain faithful to the original text, and second, transliteration. Possible strategies for tackling cultural voids will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

7.2.4 Use of old-fashioned words

The use of old-fashioned words is the fourth reason that impedes the comprehension of the three translations considered. Table 7.1 demonstrated that respondents of the questionnaire deem that this drawback affects the comprehension of the three translations at a level of 13.93%. Table 7.8 shows that the respondents believe Ali's version, the worst in this respects, constitutes 64.44% of this 13.93%, Arberry 22.22%, and Al-Hilali and Khan 13.33%., as follows:

Table 7.8



Words are the key factor in transferring meaning and relaying messages. Successful communication cannot be achieved without words. Transferring a message clearly requires using words which are known to the reader. If the text uses alien or unfamiliar vocabulary, the reader will fail to grasp the meaning properly.

Nowadays, most native speakers of English know only common, everyday and contemporary vocabulary. They are unfamiliar with non-contemporary texts. Therefore, using outmoded vocabulary hinders the transfer of comprehensible content for most contemporary readers because they are unfamiliar with the meaning of these words. It is like using vocabulary from a different language which is unknown to them. Using obsolete and rare vocabulary is one of the reasons that impedes the transfer of clear content in the translations of the meaning of the Quran into English.

The shortcoming of using obsolete words affects Ali's translation more than that of Arberry, or Al-Hilali and Khan. Ali writes in a language that draws on forms used by Shakespeare, Milton and Ben Johnson, and is thus very old and out-of-date. This is a very odd thing to do in the 20th century, especially as there are few native speakers of English who can understand these great authors without explanation or even interpretation. Unlike Arabic, English has no fixed standard and so keeps changing all the time. Therefore, to address English speakers clearly and comprehensibly, there is a need to use the language they use; contemporary English. As translating the meaning of the Quran is a necessity for non-Arab Muslims whether they are native or non-native speakers of English, the use of very old-fashioned words prevents these people from understanding the language clearly. For instance, Ali translates حمر مستنفرة (74: 50) into English as *affrighted asses*. Regardless of rendering an inaccurate meaning, the word *affrighted* cannot even be found in widely-used modern dictionaries such as Longman or the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary. As the reader is not familiar with this term, and they cannot find it in the dictionary, their understanding of the verse will be lacking.

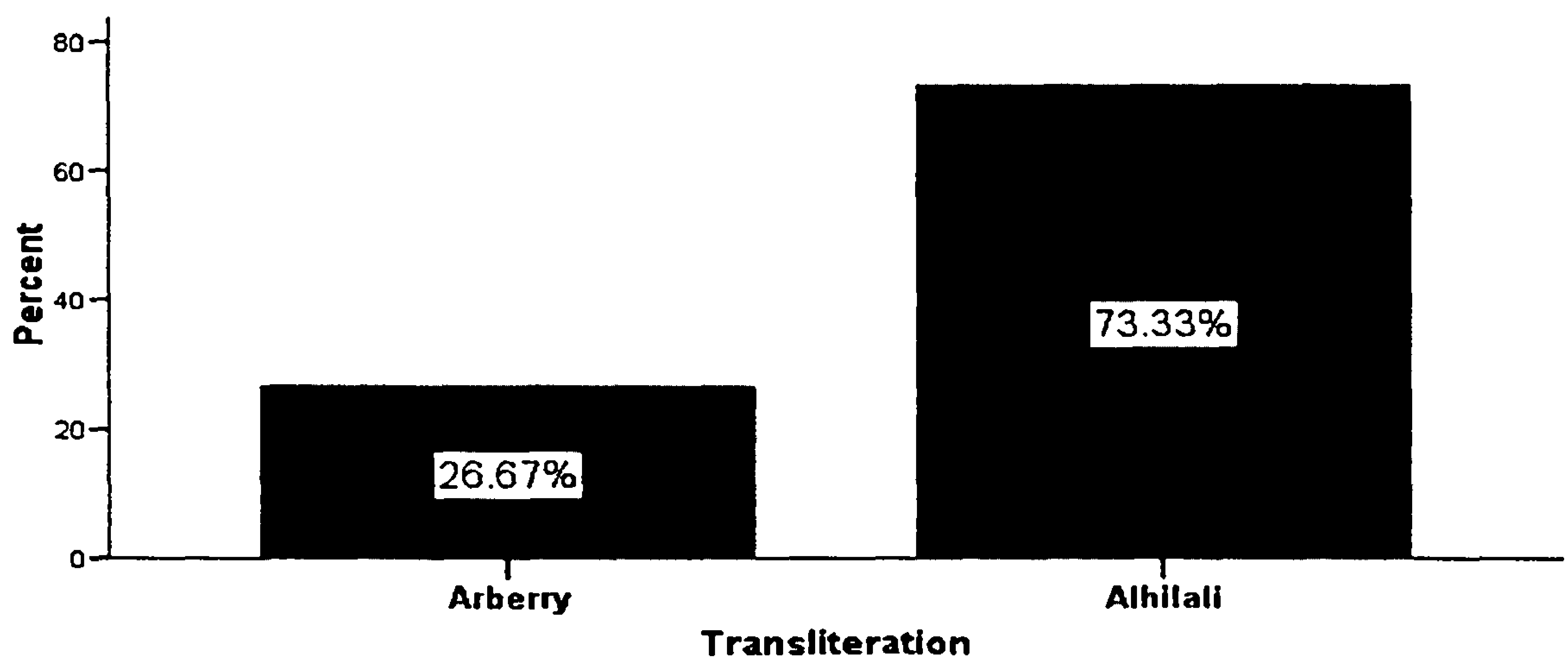
The questionnaire respondents believe that Arberry's translation suffers somewhat from the use of old-fashioned words too. Some of the obsolete words used in Arberry were unfamiliar to them so they did not understand the general meaning of the text. They also claim that the use of outmoded words does not only affect comprehensibility but also makes the text tedious and off-putting.

Consider the following example. *They said, 'Thou knowest we have no right to thy daughters, and thou well knowest what we desire.'* (Arberry, 11: 79). Although most English readers are familiar with the vocabulary used in the sample shown above, they would not find this language attractive, and would be alienated by it. Therefore, the use of outmoded vocabulary does not facilitate the transfer of any obvious meaning and it makes the text boring.

7.2.5 Transliteration

The questionnaire results show that transliteration is the fifth reason that affects comprehension of the three translations of the meaning of the Quran into English considered here. This factor influences the intelligibility of the three translations at 10.36%. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation constitutes 73.33% of this 10.36% and Arberry comprises 26.67%. Table 7.9 illustrates this.

Table 7.9



Transliteration, then, is considered by the questionnaire respondents as a shackle that impedes comprehensibility. This technique is used by translators either because they deem that some of the Quranic terms are highly emotive and there are no English words that can transfer the same shade of meaning as the original, so they transliterate these words, or because they consider that there are cultural elements in the Quran and no English expressions can conjure up the same image. The results of the questionnaire verify the unacceptability of using this method. None of the respondents understood any of the transliterated terms given in the questionnaire except for one which was understood only by the non-Arab Muslim respondent. This method does not

facilitate the conveying of any meaning. Transliteration forms do not convay any meaning to target readers because they are merely a conjunction of English letters. These letters represent alien words which are neither lexicalized in their language, nor are familiar in their culture. Consequently, the reader who does not have prior knowledge of these terms will fail to understand the general meaning of the verse. Only Muslims, and typically Arab Muslims, can comprehend them as they are familiar with these terms.

Transliteration affects intelligibility more in Al-Hilali and Khan as they made very heavy use of this approach. Certainly, some Quran-specific cultural and linguistic features are translation-resistent. Other languages cannot transfer the same shade of meaning because they are not lexicalized. Examples are *Zakat* and *Tayammum*. However, there are not very many of these elements in the Quran. They can be transliterated, followed by brief details between brackets, or footnoted where they need longer explanation in a way that does not affect the flow of the text. Al-Hilali and Khan transliterate all names e.g. *Maryam*, almost all ritual behavior e.g. *Hajj*, theological expressions e.g. *jinn,* abstract moral concepts e.g *taqwa*, and material culture e.g. *Khimar*. Other than failing to transfer any meaning, overuse of transliteration hinders the flow of the text and makes it tedious. Most of the transliterated terms in Al-Hilali and Khan have equivalents in the target language that can provide the target reader with the same image. Transferring *Hajj* as "pilgrimage" would relay the same image despite the different rituals practiced in different cases. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation does not help non-Muslim readers to understand the Quran. Only those who have a good previous knowledge of the Quran can comprehend the meaning. Even non-Arab Muslims are unlikely to understand the content. This is because the translation is loaded with transliteration. In order to understand the meaning in Al-Hilali and Khan's translation, the reader has to have a prior awareness of these transliterated terms. Apart from failing to transfer an obvious meaning and the loss of flow, transliteration generates another reason for incomprehensibility which is the excessive use of details between brackets. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

As shown in table 7.9, the effect of transliteration on comprehensibility in Arberry is less than in Al-Hilali and Khan. This is because Arberry transliterates only terms he thinks are linguistically and culturally void. Though transliterated terms are few in Arberry, some texts are incomprehensible to the target reader. This is because Arberry does not clarify these terms either

by brief details in the body of the text or by footnotes. In some cases, he transliterates elements for which English has equivalents or semantically similar words which could be used in a comprehensible way. Consider the following example. In translating the verse قال عفريتٌ من الجن (27:39), Arberry transliterates the two main words as "An *efreet* of the *jinns* said". This transliteration does not explain the meaning of these two terms, so the target reader fails to understand the content. Transliteration could be avoided in this case and Arberry could have translated this phrase as *a powerful spirit amongst the spirits said,* etc. This translation can help the target reader to understand the meaning.

As shown in Table 7.9, it was not mentioned that transliteration affects comprehensibility in Ali. This is due to the fact that the questionnaire did not include any extract by Ali which involves transliteration. The questionnaire was limited twenty extracts and there was no possibility to add any more. In fact, Ali's translation has this feature. There are some verses where transferring a comprehensible meaning was hindered by the transliteration of some terms. Consider the following instance.

وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ

"They would not follow Thy Qibla; nor art thou going to follow their Qibla; nor indeed will they follow each other's Qibla."

(Ali, 2: 145)

Transliterating the term Qibla قبلة hinders the transfer of any obvious meaning to non-Muslim readers as they are unfamiliar with this term. There is no need to transliterate this word because it has an equivalent in English which is "prayer direction". This expression will be generally comprehensible to speakers of English.

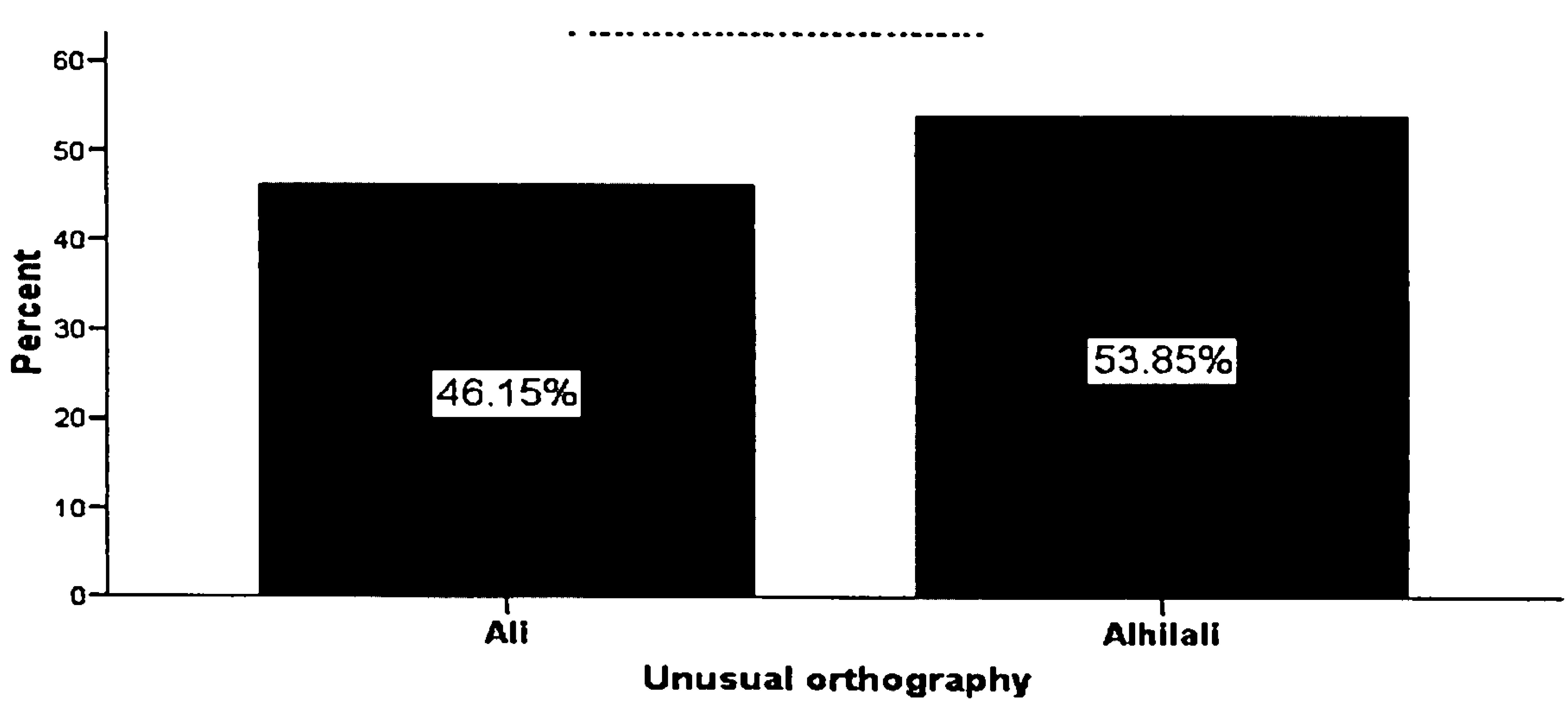
The discussion above establishes that the use of transliteration does not serve to transfer an obvious meaning to all target readers including some non-Arab Muslims. Non-Muslim and non-Arab Muslim readers who are not familiar with the transliterated terms will fail to understand the meaning. Only Arab Muslims can understand the content and they are not the target of the

translation. One of the respondents was a British PhD Muslim student of Pakistani background. According to her, she performs prayers and fasts in Ramadan (the Muslim fasting month). She claims that she is eager to learn as much as she can about the Quran, although she recognised only one transliterated term, which is *Zakat*. This is because *Zakat* is the third pillar of Islam. Since she is not an Arab Muslim, she did not comprehend the other examples given in the questionnaire. From this it can be claimed that transliteration is useless in most cases and, therefore, should be avoided.

7.2.6 Unusual orthography and punctuation

Unusual orthography and punctuation was selected by the questionnaire respondents as the sixth commonest factor impeding comprehensibility. Respondents deem that this factor affects the clarity of the three translations in question at 42.94%. Table 7.10 shows that Ali constitutes 46.15% of this percentage, while Al-Hilali and Khan 53.85%. Arberry's translation does not contain this feature.

Table 7.10



The punctuation system in Arabic is not as important as in English. The flow and development of Arabic sentences or paragraphs usually rely on a system of conjunctions and relative clauses. A whole paragraph could be composed of one long unpunctuated sentence conveying a clear meaning. By contrast, punctuation marks in English are central elements in the readability of any text because they organize the flow and development of the text in a logical way. Full stops, for

instance, sort out distinct ideas to make the text clear. Commas represent a slight pause in a sentence or are used to separate words in order to organize the development of the sentence, etc. The absence or misuse of punctuation marks confuses the English reader in that he cannot know where the sentence starts and where it ends. He cannot understand which clause follows which. It also means that ideas may be mixed up and the text difficult to follow. Therefore, the reader struggles to understand the content.

Quranic verses are not punctuated. The shift from one idea to another is usually denoted by conjunctions such as و *wa* (and) and other particle such as إنّ *inna*, which has no equivalent in English. Ali and Al-Hilali and Khan misuse punctuation marks in their translations, making the text confusing. Ideas are not distinguished properly and sentences are not organised clearly. These resultant confusing texts affect the understanding of the translations. This fact is stressed by respondents of the questionnaire and those who were interviewed for more explanations about their responses.

There are hundreds of orthographic and punctuation faults in Ali's translation which confuse the reader. Consider the following instance.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهَانٌ مَقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي اؤْتُمِنَ
أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

"If ye are on a journey, and cannot find a scribe, a pledge with possession (may serve the purpose). ***And*** *if one of you deposits a thing on trust with another,* ***Let*** *the trustee (Faithfully) discharge* ***His*** *trust, and let him fear* ***his*** *Lord. Conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it,-* ***His*** *heart is tainted with sin. And Allah* ***Knoweth*** *all that ye do"*

(Ali, 2: 283).

According to the English system of writing, when a pronoun stands for God it should be capitalized, so as to suggest honouring of God and to distinguish between references to God and humans. In the sample shown above, the three references to *his* stand for the same individual which is *the trustee*. Ali capitalizes the first reference which stands for *the trustee* causing confusion. As it is capitalized, the reader would be likely to understand that the Quran asks the

trustee to discharge God's trust as the trust preceded by the capitalized reference. The second uncapitalized reference makes the reader sure that the trust refers to God. This confuses the reader and leads him to fail to understand the text clearly.

Ali's translation is loaded with incorrectly capitalized words. This serves no purpose. Consider the two words in bold in the example mentioned above. He capitalizes *let* and *knoweth* incorrectly. Moreover, Ali frequently starts frequencies sentences with *and,* breaking stylistic norms of English writing and generating confusion for the reader. This is because و *wa* (and) in Arabic is used in some cases to denote the beginning of a new idea or sentence, while a sentence starting with *and* in English shows a very specific continuation of the previous sentence.

The shortcomings of punctuation in Al-Hilali and Khan are not as bad as those in in Ali. However, comprehensibility of some texts is affected by incorrect punctuation. The excessive use of explanatory details between brackets, loading the text with transliteration and the peculiarity of style affects the punctuation system, making the text, to some extent, difficult for the reader. Consider the following example.

غُلِبَتِ الرُّومُ (2) فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ (3) فِي بِضْعِ سِنِينَ

"The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years".

(Al-Hliali and Khan, 30: 2-4)

In the sample shown above, Al-Hilali and Khan render the Quranic style literally. They split up the two verses by ending the first verse with a full stop then starting the second verse with a preposition, which is abnormal in English. Trying to preserve the Quranic verse numbering affects style and punctuation and this causes confusion for the target reader. There is no need here to split the two verses, particularly since they are read together in the Quran and a pause is not required. Moreover, the second sentence is ungrammatical.

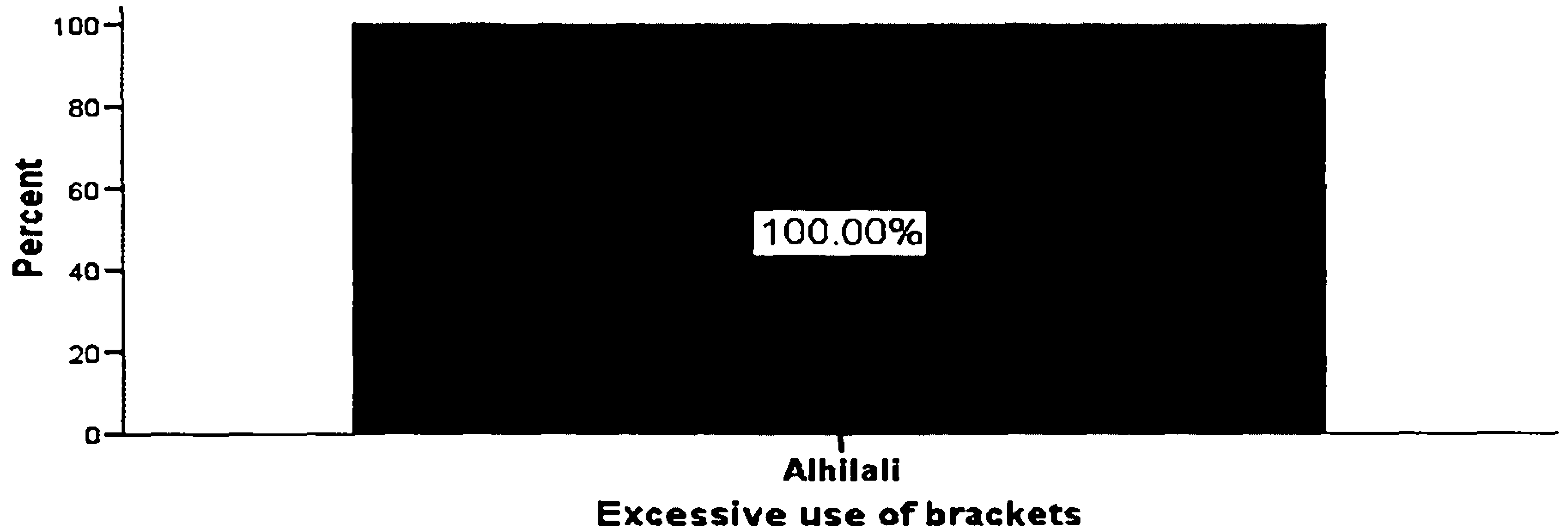
It is worth mentioning that Al-Hilali and Khan arguably mistranslate the verse shown above. They render في أدنى الأرض *fi adnal ard* as "in the nearest land" while the appropriate meaning is "in the lowest land". According to the Arabic dictionary, أدنى means lowest and not nearest.

According to Muslim scholars (Zaghlul 2004), this relatively short Quranic verse contains three miracles. The battle in question between the Romans (Byzantines) and Persians occurred in the Jordan Valley in 614 AD when the Persians defeated the Romans who were occupying Jerusalem and controled Palestine. In 623 AD, nine years later, the Romans, led by Heraclius, defeated the Persians, recovered Jerusalem, and regained control of Palestine. The three miracles in the verse shown above are: A) the Prophet Muhammad, or rather the Quran, informed the Muslims about the Persian victory over the Romans as soon as the battle had finished. Relaying information about the battle's consequences from the battlefield to Medina would take weeks, while the Quran informed Muhammad about the result on the same day, B) the Quran prophesized the Romans' victory over the Persians in another battle and it delimited the time which was in fact nine years by saying في بضع سنين *in a few years*. In Arabic, بضع سنين (a few years) denotes a period of time from three up to nine years (Abu Assu'ud 1990 vol 5: 270 & Ibn Kathir 1999 vol 6: 297). C). The Quran stated that the battle happened on the lowest spot on Earth. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, satellites have recorded that the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea, where the battle occurred, is indeed the lowest spot on Earth. Satellites have shown that the Jordan Valley is 395 meters below sea level and Jericho is the lowest part of the valley being 402 meters below sea level (Zaghlool Al-Najjar, 2004). Al-Hilali and Khan translate this verse using a relatively old interpretation. I believe that new interpretations and recent scientific discoveries should be taken into account in translating the Quran.

7.2.7 Excessive use of Brackets

The excessive use of brackets is selected by the questionnaire respondents as the least common reason for incomprehensibility. According to them, this affects comprehensibility of the three translations in question at a rate of 3.21%. This percentage is low because the problem affects only one translation, that of Al-Hilali and Khan. Ali and Arberry do not suffer from this weakness. Table 7.11 demonstrates this.

Table 7.11



Al-Hilali and Khan use explanatory information between brackets as a method for elucidating both cultural elements and transliterated terms. As the Quran is rich in cultural elements and the translators overuse transliteration, they load up the version with explanatory information between brackets. In most cases, details between brackets are relatively long. The insertion of long phrases or clauses between brackets without relatives and conjunctions breaks the flow of these phrases and clauses in the text, reducing coherence and cohesion which are basic factors in readability. When the reader reads through vague expressions or transliterated terms followed by incoherent and fragmented explanatory text, they lose the thread of the text and become confused. These confusing broken sentences cause readers to fail to understand the meaning. Moreover, excessive use of explanatory information between brackets makes the text tedious and it distances readers from the Quran.

7.3 Recommendations

The discussion above illustrates that incomprehensibility in the three translations considered is a result of poor translation. The translators fail to render the original content as a natural sounding text in the target language for two reasons. Either the translator adopts unsuccessful techniques to render the content, such as transliteration, brackets, etc., breaking the basic norms of idiomatic translation, or he lacks full knowledge of one of the two cultures and languages such as style and connotative meaning. In other words, it is the translators themselves who are to blame for this failure to transfer the original meaning into English in a comprehensible way. This unsatisfactory situation has encouraged other individuals to produce new translations. These translators have thought that the existing translations either fail to transfer the meaning clearly or distort the

meaning. They sometimes assert that the previous translators are not able to transfer the Quran into English either because they are not properly qualified or they are not faithful to the original text. However, none of these translators was able to produce a reliable translation. Some translators tried to relay an accurate meaning but they failed to transfer it into acceptable language thus generating some shortcomings. Some tried to compensate for these shortcomings by using techniques such as archaic words but they produced another weakness such as peculiar style. Others tried to improve the style but their translations involved different shortcomings such as literal renderings. Hasanuddin Ahmad (1996, chap 10: 5) supports this view. He claims that "all the existing translations of the Quran suffer from inherent shortcomings and limitations".

Muslims believe that the Quran is the absolute Word of God. The Quranic text is very sensitive and no individual can alter any letter of it. In transferring the meaning into other languages, therefore, the translator must be extremely careful. The transfer of meaning must be extremely accurate; there must not be any loss of or addition to the rendered meaning. However, rendering the meaning of the Quran into English as accurately as possible yet so that it is readable and fluent should not be an impossible task, assuming that "anything that can be said in one language can be said in another" (Nida 1969:4). It is reasonable to suppose that if the Quran was revealed in English, the meaning would have certainly been as clear as in Arabic. English is an eloquent language which can express feelings and thoughts clearly. Therefore, it should be possible to transfer the same meaning, or rather a very similar meaning into English if the linguistic shackles of the original are removed and cultural elements are tackled. In this respect, this research will recommend the following techniques to tackle the linguistic shackles and modernize vocabulary, and will propose some vital strategies to fill the cultural gap, as follows.

1) We illustrated in this chapter that Quranic discourse has specific and unique stylistic and syntactic properties. Style and syntactic properties stand shoulder to shoulder to produce the desired communicative goal (Abdul-Raof 2004). We also illustrated how some translators failed to reproduce the Quranic style in the English language and how this produced an alien and heavy style making comprehension almost impossible. The basic aim of translating the meaning of the Quran is to appropriately present the target reader, whether they are Muslim or not, with the exact meaning and spirit of the original text. The target reader needs to understand precisely what the Quran says; to experience the spirit, feelings and ideas of this message. The ease with which this

message will be understood depends on naturalness of structure. Thus, the meaning of the Quran should be rendered in a natural English style. In other words, the translation must provide the closest possible meaning to the original and have a similar effect on the target reader by transferring these elements in a beautiful natural English style. The translator should free himself from the linguistic shackles and concentrate only on transferring clearly the closest meaning to that of the original. Nida and Taber (1969: 5) stress this method, arguing that "to preserve the content of the message the form must be changed". Rendering the meaning of the Quran in a natural English style means that the target text is attractive, the meaning is clear and precise, and the rendition has a similar effect to that of the original on the reader. Natural style also makes certain that the translation is free from other shortcomings such as unusual orthography and punctuation. It is worth stressing that in order to have a natural and beautiful English style, this style must be constructed and improved by a native speaker of English who is a highly competent stylist.

A translator is like a tailor. The tailor usually designs clothes according to the size and shape of the body of his customer in order for the customer to appear elegant and sensible. Not all customers are the same size and shape. If clothes do not fit the body properly then the person will look bizarre. Similarly, the translator should transfer the meaning of the original in a style that matches the stylistic norms of the target language.

2) This study proves that overusing transliteration as a technique to render the meaning is ineffective. It fails to transfer any meaning as it merely uses Latin letters to produce nonce-forms which the target reader is not familiar with. Hence, it should be avoided unless there is a pressing need for it.

There are some reliable procedures to avoid transliteration. First, when words have many shades of meaning such as *wali* والي, *muhsin* مُحسِن, etc. each word has to be translated according to its meaning in the verse. This is because the translation is necessarily exegetical. If transferring the meaning requires more words to get the meaning across, then the translator has to accept this. Second, some Arabic proper names have standard indigenous English equivalents. In this case, the translator should avoid transliteration and use the English equivalents (Dickins et el. 2002:32). Third, when the translator comes across ritual behaviour that has a near-equivalent in

English such as *Salat* (prayers), *Hajj* (pilgrimage), etc. the translator should use this equivalent because it conjures up roughly the same image in the target reader's mind despite the different ceremonial practice between the two religions where the reader is not a Muslim. Where the reader is a Muslim the target language equivalent conveys the same meaning.

The Quran contains some cultural elements which are translation-resistent because they are highly emotive and have religious overtones. Other languages cannot relay the same shade of meaning. An attempt to translate these terms will fail to render the exact meaning because these terms are not lexicalised and there is no equivalent cultural practice in the target language. This failure will hence distort the original. In this case, the translator can transliterate these terms and explain the meaning by using footnotes. Transliteration should only be used when all other translation techniques fail to transfer an accurate meaning. Dickins et el. (2002: 32) stress this arguing that "transliteration could be used when there is a possibility that translating the ST term will distort or fail to transfer the same equivalent". They (ibid: 33) add that "where precise technical terms are imported, one solution is for the translator to add a glossary at the end of the book or to use footnotes or endnotes". Freeing the translation from transliteration to the minimum results in minimizing the use of explanatory details between brackets and thus maximizes comprehensibility.

3) This study reveals that using archaic vocabulary in translating the meaning of the Quran fails to render a clear meaning as the used terms are unfamiliar to the average target reader. This makes the style very awkward, the text tedious and readability difficult. Therefore, archaic vocabulary should not be used in the target text. The translator should use modern English vocabulary which reads easily and flows smoothly. This will both deliver the meaning clearly and make the text attractive.

4) Literal translation is a very serious factor which affects the target text both in terms of meaning and comprehensibility. It fails to render the intended meaning causing distortion, and it produces a confusing text which cannot be understood by the target reader. Thus, literal translation must be avoided in all cases. The classical Arabic of the Quran is very rich and its words have many shades of meaning. Arabic and English are in many respects semantically incompatible languages. The intended meaning of words in Arabic is not necessarily the same as those of the

apparent equivalent in English. Literal translation will therefore easily lead to either an inaccurate meaning by distorting the original, or to a vague text. Hence, when transferring the meaning of the Quran, the text has to be carefully analyzed. The translator is required to fully appreciate and understand the depth of the meaning of each Quranic word in order to find an English equivalent which relays the same sense. He has to make sure that the English words used transfer the same meaning as the original. In some cases, transferring the meaning requires more words in English to get the meaning across.

5) Producing a translation with a natural English style which uses modern vocabulary and is free from transliteration, along with precisely transferring the intended meaning of the original maximally enhances comprehensibility. Any incomprehensible element in the translation henceforward will likely be due to cultural differences. It was mentioned earlier that transferring cultural elements into the target text is believed to be the most difficult task that faces translators. However, there are some well established strategies for tackling these elements. These strategies can help the translator to render the cultural elements of the source text with maximum clarity into the target text. Cultural elements in the Quran usually involve either proper names or ritual practices. This chapter will divide each of these elements into two types and will propose a vital strategy to tackle the transfer of cultural elements comprehensibly.

1) Proper names. There are very many proper names in the Quran. Some refer to individuals and some to historical places or events. There are two standard ways to deal with proper names.

A) Proper names which have standard English equivalents. In this case, the translator should use the English equivalent (Dickins et el (2002: .36). For instance, المسجد الأقصى *Al-Masjid Al-Aq<u>s</u>a* is well known to native speakers of English as Al-Aqsa Mosque, المسجد الحرام *Al-Masjid Al-<u>H</u>ar<u>a</u>m* is known as Mecca, أجوج وماجوج *<u>A</u>j<u>u</u>j wa ma'j<u>u</u>j* are known as Gog and Magog, سبا *Saba'* as Sheba, etc. The translator should use the names which are standard in English. Literal translation and transliteration should be avoided because these two techniques influence the readability of the target text. Arberry, for example, translates المشعَر الحرام *Al-Mash'al Al-<u>H</u>ar<u>a</u>m* (1980, 2: 198) literally as "the Holy Waymark" causing confusion to the reader; even Muslims are unlikely be able to understand this translation. Similarly, Al-Hilali and Khan put all proper names in transliteration; then in most cases they give their standard equivalent in English between

brackets. This is not positive as it loads the translation with brackets and does not convey any obvious information to the target reader. If the translators believe it is important to familiarize the target reader with Arabic names, these names can be listed with their English equivalents in an appendix at the end of the translation.

B) Some proper names in the Quran refer to historical elements or cultural features which have no standard equivalent in English. In this case, Quranic names can be imported into English in transliteration along with brief explanatory information to identify them. For instance, the historical terms *Iram* إرم and *Thamud* ثمود are unfamiliar in English. The translator can import these two terms adding explanation information. For example, the translator can add the expression "the city of" before the term *Iram*. The target reader will thus understand that *Iram* is the name of a particular place. Similarly, the translator can add "the people of" before *Thamood.* This will make it clear that this term refers to a particular people. This technique transfers the meaning clearly and does not affect the flow of the target text. Dickins et el. (2002: 33) support this technique saying "Where the translator decides that for some reason it is necessary to retain a SL term, but also to make it plain to the reader roughly what is meant, it is sometimes possible to insert an explanation, or partial explanation, into the TT alongside the cultural borrowing, normally as unobtrusively as possible".

2) Ritual expressions: Ritual expressions can be divided into two types.

A) Ritual practices that occur, or correspond to similar practices in the target culture. In this case, domestication, or as Dickins et el. (2002: 36) call it, cultural transposition is normally the best technique to transfer these elements. For instance, the Quranic term "*Hajj*" حج can be transferred as "pilgrimage", *Wudu'* وضوء as "ablution", *As-Salat* الصلاة as "prayers", etc. Despite the different ceremonial practices of the two cultures - as the bearers of Islam and Christianity respectively- in each case, the English equivalent conjures up a sufficiently similar image that there is no noticeable loss in meaning.

B) Ritual practices which are unfamiliar in the target culture. These practices are usually represented by Quran-specific terms and convey highly emotive overtones. These terms were known and used as terms by the Arabs before Islam but when the Quran was revealed, they were

used to express new concepts and ritual practices which were not familiar to the Arabs. Dealing with this type of term is a challenging task; such terms cannot be translated into other languages because even an approximate equivalent is lacking in the target language. As they are rich in overtones, any paraphrasing translation in the target language will fail to express the same meaning and this will result in loss and distortion. In order to tackle this problem, planting of these Quranic terms in English along with exegetical footnotes becomes an essential technique to transfer the content. This method has three advantages. First, it plants the source terms in the target text without any loss of their emotive overtones. Second, planting of these terms in such an important text will familiarize the English reader with them with the result they may ultimately become lexicalized in English dictionaries. An example of this is the three terms 'Imam', 'Ihram', and 'halal'. They are found in some English dictionaries so the English reader has easy access to them. Imam was brought into English in the early 17th century, 'Ihram' in the early 18th century, and 'halal' in mid the 19th century (Encarta World English Dictionary, 1998-2004). Third, exegetical footnotes could be used to analyze and explain the precise meaning of the original term; these increase the informativeness of the original term and maintain its intended meaning. Abdul-Raof (2005: 141) states that "footnotes in Quran translation are a useful and plausible translation option. Footnotes can be used as translation enforcements which have a significant added value to the communicative process of translation". Beekman and Callow (1974: 209) stress the validity of using footnotes by saying "footnotes can provide the target reader with a more accurate historical and exegetical perspective". Some examples of terms which could be accomplished by exegetical footnotes are: *Zakat* زكاة, *Tayammum* تَيَمُّم, *'Iddah* عِدَّة, *'Awrah* عَوْرَة, *Kaffarah* كفّارة, *Diyyah* دِيَة, *Aqiqah* عقيقة, *Fidyah* فدية *'Umrah* عُمرة, etc. (see appendix 1)

7.4 Assessment of the translators

Despite Arberry's effort to produce a bona fide translation, his rendition is loaded with both mistranslation resulting in unintentional distortion of the original meaning, and literal translation resulting in the failure to transfer a clear meaning. These shortcomings result from both the relatively weak Arabic of Arberry and his lack of understanding of the original content. These break the norms of translation and do not help to achieve an acceptable translation. A good instance of this is the following verse. فأجاءها المَخاضُ إلى جذع النخلة *fa'aja'aha al makhadu ila jidh' alnakhlah* (19: 23). This verse talks about the birth of Jesus. It tells that labour pains drove Mary

to the trunk of the palm-tree. Arberry mistranslates this verse into English as "And the birthpangs surprised her by the trunk of the palm-tree". As seen, he translates the word فأجاءها *fa'aja'aha* into "surprised her". This is because he does not understand the function of the preposition *fa* and the first *hamza* in the word أجاء. He thinks the verb أجاءَ is derived from the root word فاجأ *faja'a* (to surprise) while it is derived from the root word جاءَ *ja'a* which means 'to come'. He does not distinguish between the two verbs فاجأ and فأجاءَ. The preposition here *fa* denotes a consequence followed by the past tense verb أجاءَ *a'ja'a*. فأجاءها here means *drove her*. The correct translation for the verse in question is "birth pain drove her to the trunk of the palm-tree" and not "surprised her by the trunk of the palm-tree".

The Quran is rich in metaphor and idioms, and includes some words that have many different shades of meaning. In order to get the meaning across in English, the translator must analyze these linguistic features, understand the meaning accurately, then transfer the intended meaning. This might require more wordiness in the target language. Unfortunately, Arberry renders these features literally causing a vague text in the target language. This text is sometimes so confusing that the reader fails to comprehend any sense. In addition, Arberry's failure to tackle the cultural elements, whether they are references, objects, or practices make the text unintelligible. Arberry can be a very important factor in producing a successful translation but he cannot be the only or main pillar.

Al-Hilali and Khan are probably the most knowledgeable of the translators in Arabic and possess a sufficient knowledge of the Quran. However, they are not qualified to render the meaning of the Quran into English for two reasons. First, they do not have sufficient familiarity with the target language. They neither possess full mastery of writing style in English nor do they have enough awareness of the meaning of some Quranic terms. Their style is very peculiar and the flow of the text is disrupted due to both the excessive use of explanations between brackets and transliteration. Their mastery of the target language is lacking. Second, they are not very faithful to the original. They insert their own beliefs and understanding between brackets which distorts the original and misleads the target reader. For example, they transfer the verse لا تتخذوا اليهود و النصارى أولياء into English as "*Take not the Jews and the Christians as Awlia' (friends, protectors, helpers)* (5: 51). They insert the word 'friends' which is not implicated in the meaning of the verse (Qutub 2000, vol 2: 386). Moreover, in some verses they do not transfer the meaning accurately.

For instance, they render the verse يا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا. into English as "*O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean cloths) while praying [and going around (the Tawaf of) the Ka'bah], and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance* (7: 31). In this verse, God orders Muslims to wear clean and tidy clothes when they go to every Mosque (Tantawi 1999: 1601). In their translation, Al-Hilali and Khan drop "every mosque" and replace it with "the Ka'bah" despite the fact it is not mentioned in the verse.

Ali's translation is, to some extent, better than Al-Hilali and Khan's and Arberry's. However, his translation contains some flaws; the style is odd, cultural elements are not tackled properly, the translation is full of literal translation, the use of archaic terms produces boredom, and in many cases these words are not familiar to the target reader. These flaws result from the fact that Ali is neither a native speaker of Arabic nor a native speaker of English. His proficiency in Arabic does not guarantee that he understands every shade of meaning. Similarly, his skill in manipulating English and his awareness of the target culture are lacking. Consider the following example:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا.

"Behold! We told thee that thy Lord doth encompass mankind round about: We granted the vision which We showed thee, but as a trial for men,- as also the Cursed Tree (mentioned) in the Qur'an: We put terror (and warning) into them, but it only increases their inordinate transgression!"

Ali (17:60)

This extract shows that Ali's Arabic is not perfect. He does not understand the original so he translates it literally. The clause أحاط بالناس *ahata binnas* means here that God knows everything about human being (Abu Assu'ud 1996 vol 4: 208). The literal translation of Ali does not transfer the intended sense. This extract also shows that Ali does not possess the skill of manipulating the target language. His style is very odd and does not render a clear meaning to the target reader.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented seven reasons why the questionnaire respondents deem that translation of the meaning of the Quran impede the delivery of an intelligible content in English. The seven reasons are: peculiar style, literal translation, cultural differences, use of archaic words, transliteration, unusual orthography and punctuation, and excessive use of brackets. The chapter also clarified to the reader how these weaknesses affected the target text; how off putting and what a hindrance to intelligibility they are. These reasons are not a result of the linguistic inability of English to transfer the meaning but of the weakness of the translators themselves. Each work was done by a single human being who did not have a complete knowledge of the source and receptor languages, full awareness of the two cultures, intimate acquaintance with the subject matter, mastery of stylistics in the receptor language, or sufficient effective empathy with the Quran. Several translators of the meaning of the Quran who claimed to possess these skills failed in their task; their translations contain shortcomings and limitations such as those in all the existing renditions. The translator himself is the focal element in translating. The translator of the meaning of the Quran into other languages must be special. He must possess some very important qualifications and attributes. Even this is not enough to produce a reliable translation; this translator needs a vital strategy to pursue his task. Therefore, because of the great significance of the translator and the need to establish a strategy for translating the Quran, the next chapter, Chapter Eight, will discuss the necessary qualifications and attributes of the translator of the meaning of the Quran and will suggest a strategy for his mission.

Chapter Eight

The Ideal Translator of the Quran and a Proposed Strategy for its Translation

"No discussion of the principles and procedures of translation can afford to treat translating as something apart from the translator himself" Nida (2003:145)

8.1 Introduction

In the previous century, both Muslim and non-Muslim translators were involved in translating the meaning of the Quran. Others were interested in debating whether it is translatable or not, while some were involved in criticizing the translated versions and trying to show the mistakes made in these versions. The consensus of Muslim scholars was that only a translation of the meaning of the Quran would be acceptable. The recent opinion of Muslim scholars is that none of the existing translated versions is wholly acceptable. They all attribute this to the impossibility of finding a language equivalent to the Arabic original which is able to express what the Quran says. In their attempt to tackle this problem, Muslim scholars have neglected the most important factor in achieving an acceptable translation of the meaning of the Quran. This is finding a competent translator who can accomplish the task. If an acceptable translation of the meaning of the Quran is needed, the first factor which must be considered is finding a proficient translator who can carry out this very great mission. Once a gifted translator is found, then transferring the meaning becomes an easier task. This is because "anything that can be said in one language can be said in another" (Nida 1969: 4).

Through my investigation into the field of translating the Quran, I have not found any Muslim scholar who discusses the importance of the translator's role and characteristics in translating the Quran. In addition, none of them has discussed the qualifications and attributes of those who can translate the meaning of the Quran. What is worse is that I did not even find any approved or even proposed strategy for translating the meaning of the Quran. It seems that the existing translations were done arbitrarily, and each translator took sole responsibility for accomplishing the task. Therefore, this chapter will try to expound the main qualifications and attributes which

the translator of the meaning of the Quran must possess. Then, it will aim to propose a vital strategy for translating the meaning of the Quran in an attempt to help to produce an acceptable and comprehensible translation. This proposed strategy is presumably suitable for all languages around the world, but in this study, the strategy will only be discussed in relation to translating the Quran into English. Before discussing the qualifications of the translator of the meaning of the Quran and proposing a strategy, this chapter will identify the general characteristics of the translator and then it will consider his specific role and necessary qualifications.

8.2 The significance of the translator in translation

Translation does not consist of a single subject, but involves three parties: the original text, the translator and the target text. Of course, the translator is the most important party. This is because he assumes a double identity, receptor and sender. So, the translator plays an indispensable and irreplaceable role in any translation process, as a transmitter of words, decoding and attempting to convey their understanding of the author's meaning and intentions.

Taft (1981: 75) identifies the translator as "a person who facilitates communication, understanding and action between peoples whose language and/or culture is different". Enani (1994: 5) defines the translator as "a writer who formulates ideas in words addressed to readers". Enani states that the only difference between the translator and the original writer is that the ideas are the latter's. Another difference that might be added is that the work of the translator is even more difficult than that of the original writer. The writer is supposed to produce directly their ideas and emotions in their own language however intricate and complicated their thoughts are. The translator's responsibility is much greater, for they have to relive the experiences of a different person. So, "it is the translator who translates the elites of foreign literature into his own language and introduces them to his compatriots. The translator conducts the code-switching between two different languages, reproduces the content and spirit of the source text into the target text. The translator also presents a vivid picture of the exotics and ensures its survival after hundreds of years" (Youzi 2004: 1).

House (1977: 103) maintains that the translator is a "bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities, i.e. the translator decodes messages in one language and re-encodes them in another". To sum up, we can simply say that the "translator stands as a mediator between the producer of a source text and whoever its TL receiver is. Translators mediate between two cultures not merely languages" (Hatim and Mason 1990: 223).

Some translation scholars have discussed the importance of the role of translators as a basic element in any successful translation. They suggest some focal obligations to be met by translators. For example, Nida (1964: 164) proposes that the translator must meet four basic requirements in translating. These are: 1) making sense, 2) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, 3) having a natural and easy form of expression, and 4) producing a similar response. Grice (1978) believes that any communication including translation is governed by five maxims. These are 1) cooperation: the addresser must make their conversational contribution such as is required by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged 2) Quantity: making contribution as informative as is required 3) Quality: the addresser should not say what they believe to be false, or that for which they lack adequate evidence 4) Relation: be relevant 5) Manner: the addresser has to be frank, avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly (cited in Hatim and Mason 1990: 62)

8.3 Characteristics of the ideal translator

The most obvious requirement of a translator is that he must have a satisfactory knowledge of the source language. It is not enough that he has the ability to get the general implication of the meaning, or that he is skilful in consulting dictionaries. Rather, he must understand not only the obvious content of the message, but also the subtleties of meanings, the significant emotive values of words, and the stylistic features which determine the flavour and feel of the message. Mastery of the source language ensures that the meaning conveyed by the source text author is very clearly and accurately understood by the translator. In this sense, Nida (2003: 145) asserts that "if the translator is to produce an acceptable translation, he must have an excellent background in the source language and at the same time must have control over the resources of

the language into which he is translating. He cannot simply match words from a dictionary; he must in a real sense create a new linguistic form to carry the concept expressed in the source language".

Another very important requirement of the translator is that he should have a thorough knowledge of the target language he is working on regardless of whether this is source or target language. He must be knowledgeable about all the linguistic and semantic features of that language. That is to say, he must know how the language in question generates sentences and how structures are related to one another for it is this kind of knowledge which makes it possible to manipulate the structures readily and effectively. Moreover, it is essential that the translator be fully acquainted with the meanings of syntactic structures. In other words, the translator has to have complete control of the target language to ensure an acceptable text is produced.

Proficiency in the source and target languages is not, however, a sufficient requirement for a good translator. In order to translate well, the translator should possess other skills. First, he must have a satisfactory awareness of the cultures of the two languages in question. Leppihalme (1997: 4) points out that "translators need to be not just bilingual but bicultural in order to fully understand the target text and be able to transmit it to the target audience". Hatim and Mason (1990: 223) hold the same opinion stating that "the translator has not only a bilingual ability but also a bi-cultural vision". They even go so far as to assert that the awareness of culture is more important than the awareness of languages because "translators mediate between cultures" (ibid: 224). They add that in most cases, the linguistic problems could be overcome by referring to dictionaries but cultural problems stand in the way of transferring the meaning if the translator does not fully understand the cultural situation of the text. Second, the translator has to have sufficient experience in writing skills. In other words, the translator must be a real writer. He must be both sensitive to and capable of producing an appropriate style. He must be acquainted with these styles both in theory and in practice, because any translator "who cannot himself write acceptably is rarely able to translate well" (Nida 2003: 242). Third, "the translator must have a thorough acquaintance with the subject matter concerned" (Limaye 1955). Translators are considered mediators of knowledge. If the translator is not highly aware of what he is working on, then he will not be able to transfer this knowledge properly. Wilss (1996: 143) confirms this, pointing out that "in translation.... in order to mediate knowledge, translators must be

knowledgeable themselves".

To sum up, according to Nord (1992: 47), the ideal translator should possess several competences in translation. He must have "competence of text reception and analysis, research competence, transfer competence, competence of text production, competence of translation quality assessment, and of course, linguistic and cultural competence both on the source and target side". Johnson and Whiteloch similarly (1987: 13) point out that "a good translator is one who has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge; target language knowledge, text type knowledge, source language knowledge, real world knowledge, and contrastive knowledge".

8.4 Faithfulness of the translator

Faithfulness in translation means that the translator should be faithful to both the original writer and to the receptor. To be faithful to the original writer implies that the translator must transfer the same meaning as the original without any addition or deletion, unless it is a necessity for the sake of keeping the meaning clear. In other words, the translation should convey to the receptor the same information as the original conveyed to its receptor. The message must not be distorted or changed. This means that the translator is not allowed to add what he believes is right, or to omit what he believes is wrong. Nida (2003: 154) stresses that "intellectual honesty requires the translator to be as free as possible from personal intrusion in the communication process. The translator should never tack on his own impressions or distort the message to fit his own intellectual and emotional outlook". Venuti (1995: 6) points out that traditionally at least "the translator must be invisible in the translation". According to this view the translator will make the ideal translation as transparent as a piece of glass through which one can see clearly. Similarly, the translated text must be read as if it had been originally written in the target language.

Faithfulness to the receptor means that the translation should be natural in the target language. It must adhere the linguistic features of the target language in order to be understood in a similar way to the original. The translation should follow natural language patterns, including ordinary vocabulary, grammatical patterns, sentence length, word usage, normal idioms, figures of speech, comprehensibility, complexity of clausal embeddings, and word order. Moreover, the translation

should be sensitive to achieving a good style which is normal in the target language. In other words, the translation should not sound like a translation, but should sound like a normal discourse in the target language. Beekman and Callow (1986: 34) emphasize that "the naturalness of the translation and the ease with which it is understood should be comparable to the naturalness of the original and to the ease with which the recipients of the original documents understood them".

8.5 Qualifications and attributes of the translator of the meaning of the Quran

Translating the Quran is not an easy task. The Quran is not like any other work. It is neither a piece of literature which needs a creative translator to transfer the beauty of a text with some changes to the meaning and situations, nor just ideas or a scientific text to be transferred into an ordinary style. Nor does it discuss only one specific field of knowledge. "The Quranic discourse is characterised by prototypical linguistic, rhetorical, textual and phonetic features" Abdul-Raof (2001: 68). In addition, the Quran arguably provides scientific information and formulates social laws. Thus, translating the divine message of the Quran demands a highly specialized translator who has a thorough knowledge of different subjects and experiences.

It has been argued at the beginning of this chapter that the translator should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter of the text he is dealing with. This assumes that the translator of the meaning of the Quran must be thoroughly knowledgeable about every pattern in this Book. In other words, he must possess the same level of knowledge as the interpreter in order to be able to transfer an accurate meaning. Pioneer Muslim scholars ('ulama' as-salaf) stated that the interpreter should fulfil certain preconditions. Thus, a translator of the meaning of the Quran should meet the same conditions as the interpreter of the Quran meets. These conditions are:

1) The first essential condition of the interpreter is that he must have a very good knowledge of Arabic. Knowledge of Arabic and its grammar is an extremely important factor in interpreting the Quran for two main reasons. First, the Quran is revealed in very lofty language which has very strongly rhetorical vocabulary. This needs an expert in Arabic in order to fully understand the connotative and denotative meanings and interpret them. In addition, the Quran uses metaphor, irony and other linguistic features which need an expert in the linguistic features of Arabic to

analyze and understand them. Second, grammar plays a very important role in the interpretation of the text. For example, unlike English, Arabic and particularly the Quranic text does not have very fixed word order. Subjects and objects are identified by vocalisation. Therefore, this feature will be confusing to the translator if he does not possess enough knowledge about it and, as a result, the meaning will be misrepresented in English.

2) The translator has to have a solid knowledge of the Prophetical sayings (hadith) in order to understand the Quran well. Muslim scholars claim that the Prophet Muhammad is the interpreter of the Quran, and this interpretation can be obtained through his sayings. They assert that without Muhammad's (pbuh) sayings, we cannot understand and carry out the commands of God in the Quran. Muslim scholars quote the following verses to support their contention:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

We reveal to you this reminder so that you may explain to the people what is revealed to them and to let them reflect. (16:44)

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

It is He who has sent among the illiterate a Messenger from among them, to recite His signs to them, and to purify them and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom. (62:2)

3) The translator must have a thorough knowledge of the exegesis of the consensus of the pioneer Muslim scholars of the Quran *(ijma' 'ulama' as-salaf)* along with a good knowledge of recent scientific discoveries related to some verses in the Quran which talk about scientific facts.

4) The translator must know the Quran by heart and have a good knowledge of the history of the revelation of the Quran. This book was revealed gradually over a period of twenty-three years of the Prophet's life. For this reason every verse of the Quran is related to a certain specific historical incident. So, if the translator does not know this history, and he does not know the reasons for the revelation of the verses, his interpretation of the Quran will be lacking. Moreover, the translator should notify the reader in a margin of abrogated verses in order to avoid any contradiction with other verses.

Scholars of translation (Nida 2003, Nord 1992, Hatim and Mason 1990, etc) have argued that a translator should have a mastery of the target language and culture. Therefore, another two important characteristics must be possessed by the translator of the meaning of the Quran. They are:

5) The translator has to have a thorough knowledge of the target language and to be aware of the culture of its native speakers. Needless to say, the richness of vocabulary, depth of culture and vision of the translator in manipulating the target language could certainly result in producing a conspicuous effect on the receptor. The final work should, to some extent, have a similar ease of beauty as the original.

6) The translator must have satisfactory experience in translation both theoretically and practically.

As pointed out earlier (Venuti 1995, Nida 2003, etc), faithfulness to the original source is very important in translation. Therefore, it is very important that the translator should meet the following condition:

7) The translator should not reflect non-orthodox sectarian views. If the Quran is translated by different sectarian translators and their translations are affected by their beliefs, then there will be some different and contradictory versions. This will result in serious distortion. Finally, as a sensitive and extraordinary religious text, according to Muslims, the translation of the Quran needs a highly sensitive translator. Thus, another condition might be added to the previous ones. This condition is:

8) The translator must have a real spiritual feeling for the Quran.

8.6 A proposed strategy for translating the meaning of the Quran

The above discussion of the required competence for translating the Quran leads us to the conclusion that it is likely to be impossible to find a single person who possesses the eight aforementioned fields of knowledge. No individual is likely to possess the necessary fields of knowledge to achieve a readable and comprehensible translation equivalent to the ease of the Quran; it is beyond the capacities of a single person. Nida (2003: 241) emphasizes that "even when the translator has a relatively high degree of practical competence, he may lack certain specific types of knowledge which are of strategic importance". Therefore, the safest and most sensible way to produce an acceptable version of the meaning of the Quran in the target language is for this work to be performed by a team, organized and supported by an independent world Muslim committee.

The editorial committee will have a paramount role in the translation process. In the first place, the editorial committee will be responsible for organizing the whole process starting from the responsibility of finding the right personnel to accomplish the work and finishing with the publication of the translation. The committee should take responsibility for finding highly competent interpreters, translators and revisers. It should also be responsible for finding the appropriate place for the translation to be done and for supplying the translation mission with stationary, technical equipment and all the money needed to cover other essentials. In addition, it should be responsible for the final revision and publishing the ultimate translation. Moreover, the editorial committee must cover a number of basic aspects of the work. They are: 1) determination of the responsibility and authority of the various persons and groups involved in the programme; 2) the means by which the work of the different persons and groups is to be coordinated; 3) the order in which the different parts of the mission are to be taken up; 4) the strategies and methods for making decisions (developed from Nida and Taber 1969).

The team involved in translating the meaning of the Quran will include a number of different scholars who have very high level skills in the different areas which make up all the necessary elements of the translation process. So, the team will presumably consist of a number of scholars each one of which is an acknowledged expert in his topic. The team must include three main

highly skilled scholars, each of whom will have a particular job to do. Moreover, each one of these scholars will head a group of consultants whose job is to supply specific information in response to particular questions. In fact, each group should be as small as possible, for competence is not measured by numbers, and additional members of a group usually slow down the process due to expected and unwanted debates (ibid).

However, it is also important for each scholar to realize that his informants can often play a far more important role than he gives them credit for. It must be acknowledged that the more such persons can be brought in as active participants in the translation process, the more likely it is that the final structure of the translation will match natural usage. That is to say, it is not enough to use an informant merely as a source of specific information. He should be made a part of the translating team, and be able to share in the process of transferring and restructuring of the message. Members of the team must be selected from those individuals who have exceptional scholarly gift and not because of their respective organizations or because they may be politically important in their communities (ibid). The three scholarly groups are as follows:

1) The first group is to be headed by an exegete who is knowledgeable in interpreting the Quran and an expert in Arabic as well as being an expert in prophetical sayings *(ḥadīth)*. In order to avoid any sectarian involvement, this scholar must interpret the Quran according to the consensus of the Pioneer Muslim scholars. A scholar such Dr. Muhammad Hidayah who possesses these elements might be elected to do this job.

Dr. Muhammad Hidayah, is a scholar of Arabic who is specialist in the language of the Quran. He learned the Quran by heart during his childhood and graduated from Al-Azhar University. He has been involved in missionary work since 1979 and has carried out a number of studies and pieces of research about Arabic and the language of the Quran. Hidaya studied the pioneer Muslim scholars that he can explain the point of view of each one and the differences between them. He prepares for compiling a new comprehensive interpretation of the Quran and this will include scientific facts.

Hidaya is a member of the Islamic Research Assembly in Egypt, member of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, and a councillor in the Muslim World Union in Mecca.

2) The second group is to be headed by a native Arabic translator who is an expert in the Quran and who has mastered English. He should be an expert in translation both practically and theoretically. Moreover, he has to be able to work with others. An example is Prof. Muhammad Abdel Haleem who is a very famous scholar in the translation of the meaning of the Quran into English. He possesses a high competence in English and is knowledgeable about the interpretation of the Quran. He has previous experience of translating the meaning of the Quran into English.

Professor Muhammed Abdel Haleem is the director of Centre of Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and editor of the Journal of Quranic Studies. He was born in Egypt and learned the Quran by heart during his childhood. In 2004, Oxford University Press published his translation of the meaning of the Quran into English. He has also published several other works in this field. He is a scholar of the Quran, Hadith (prophetical sayings), Tafsir, translation, and culture. He possesses the fields necessary for this mission

3) The third group is to be headed by a native English scholar of translation who is expert in Arabic and who has a good knowledge of the Quran. His consultant team should comprise an expert in religious terminology and a highly qualified stylist. Both should be English native speakers. Someone like the convert Shaikh Abdal-Hakim Murad (Tim Winter) might be nominated to head this team.

Abdal Hakim Murad graduated from Cambridge University with a double-first in Arabic in 1983. He then lived in Cairo for three years, studying Islam under traditional teachers at Al-Azhar, one of the oldest universities in the world. He went on to reside for three years in Jeddah, where he administered a commercial translation office and maintained close contact with Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad and other scholars from Hadramaut, Yemen.

In 1989, Shaikh Abdal-Hakim returned to England and spent two years at the University of London learning Turkish and Farsi. Since 1992 he has been a doctoral student at Oxford University, specializing in the religious life of the early Ottoman Empire. He is currently Secretary of the Muslim Academic Trust (London) and Director of the Sunna Project at the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies at Cambridge University, which issues the first-ever scholarly

Arabic editions of the major Hadith collections.

Shaikh Abdal-Hakim is the translator of a number of works, including two volumes from Imam al-Ghazali's Ihya' Ulum al-Din. He gives lessons from time to time and taught the works of Imam al-Ghazali at the Winter 1995 Deen Intensive Program in New Haven, CT. He appears frequently on BBC Radio and writes occasionally for a number of publications, including The Independent; Q-News International, Britain's premier Muslim Magazine; and Seasons, and the semiacademic Journal of Zaytuna Institute.

Involving an exegete, and both Arab and English translators, is a very important procedure for ensuring a good translation. Hatim and Mason (1990: 93) classify problems encountered by translators into: 1) comprehension of source text problems, and 2) transfer of meaning and assessment of target text. Using only an Arab translator will not guarantee an acceptable English version for two reasons. First, there will be no guarantee that he has understood the original meaning, and second, he will not be able to manipulate the foreign language in the same way as native-speaker translator does. His translation is likely to be loaded with alien words and awkward style. Newmark (1981: 180) explains that the translator should always work into his/her native language as he argues that it is impossible for him/her to ever have the same feeling for any other language even if he/she has been living for a long time in a country other than his/her native land. Mona Baker (1992: 64) supports this point, saying that "a person's competence in actively using the idioms and fixed expressions of a foreign language hardly ever matches that of a native speaker. The majority of translators working into a foreign language cannot hope to achieve the same sensitivity that native speakers seem to have for judging when and how an idiom can be manipulated". This does not only apply to idioms, but also to collocations and sayings as well as the overall usage of vocabulary and the general style of a text. In other words, the non-native speaker cannot realistically have the same grasp for the feel of a foreign language. Thus, "it must be said that expert opinion favours translation into the first language" Campbell (1998: 57).

Similarly, involving only an English native translator will not guarantee that he has understood every utterance in the Quran. Campbell (1998: 57) argues that "in translating from a second language, the main difficulty is in comprehending the source text". Needless to say, the Quran, in

some cases, is not clear to the average Arab reader, so it will be even more unclear to a non-Arab one. Consequently, if the translator does not comprehend the foreign text well, he will not be able to transfer the same meaning as that text.

Thus, in order to avoid incomprehensibility of the source language and to ensure that the same meaning is transferred, as well as to produce natural language in the target text, the safest way is to use three persons. This will develop the translation on three levels. First, the exegete will make the Quranic text clear. Second, the Arab translator will transfer the exact meaning. Finally, the native English translator will restructure the translation adequately. Neubert (1981) claims that "working into the mother tongue avoids the problem of lack of textual competence in the target language." In other words, native writers can manipulate all the devices that go to make up natural-looking text. The same case could be argued at finer levels of linguistic analysis; first language writers are, for example, less likely to make grammatical errors and unfortunate vocabulary choices than second language writers (Campbell 1998: 57)

Finding the right persons to do the work is undoubtedly the most important and difficult step in the entire procedure. Once the right persons are found, the editorial committee should start translating the meaning of the Quran, but the translation process ought to be performed in three stages as Nida and Taber suggest. They (1969: 33) propose two systems of translation. One of these systems could be successfully applied in translating the Holy Quran as an extraordinary religious text. The following system consisting of three stages is the second one they suggest.

1) Analysis: in which the surface structure (the message as given in language A) is analysed in term of grammatical relationships, the meaning of the words and combinations of words.
2) Transfer: in which the analysed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B.
3) Restructuring, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language.

The first stage will involve the exegete and his consultant group. Their role is to interpret the Quranic verses in order to make the meaning clear for the native Arab translators. This is called the interpretation stage. Basically, the exegete analyses those vocabulary items which are not

very clear to the average reader for instance, because these words have complex semantic features or they are very formal. Then he analyses the verses grammatically and semantically in order to make the meaning apprehensible. In addition, the exegete group has to make what is implicit explicit because "experience in translation has confirmed that leaving the implicit information of the original implicit in the TL version can mislead the readers of the TL version and cause them to misunderstand the original message" Beekman and Callow (1986: 47). For example, metaphor, irony, idioms, etc. should be analysed clearly. The interpretation must be concise and precise in order to keep the translation in English as short as possible. In order to make sure that the interpretation is accurate and free from any bias, the exegete's consultants should reread the interpretation carefully. In revising the interpretation, the consultants are to write notes or comments. When finishing the reading, the group must discuss the comments in order to make certain that the work has been done as near perfectly as possible. Once the work is ready, it must be handed over to the editorial committee.

After the process of interpretation is completed, it is then essential that the resulting analysis is transferred from Arabic into English. The editorial committee asks the Arab translator to carry out the translation. The role of the Arab translator will certainly be the most crucial job. First of all, the translator has to study carefully the interpreted version together with the interpreter to ensure that he/she understands the text fully. "Exegesis thus lies at the heart of all translation works, for if the translator does not know what the original means, then it is impossible for him to translate faithfully" Beekman and Callow (1986: 35). Then the translator has to read the version again on his own. Baker (1992: 111) stresses that "a good translator does not begin to translate until s/he has read the text at least once and got a gist of the overall message". This helps the translator to consider two important elements. First, it gives him the opportunity to try to translate the meaning of the Quran in his mind before the practical work, and second, the translator will try to pick out a vital strategy for accomplishing the work properly.

The term "communicative translation" was proposed by Newmark in 1981. This strategy attempts to render the exact meaning of the original in such a way that readers may not find difficulties in understanding the message of the translated text and it produces the same effect as the original reader. Newmark (1981: 38) says "communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original".

Abdul-Raof (2001: 181) postulates a communicative strategy as an effective approach to translating the Quran. He believes that the major objective of Quran translation is to broadcast the meaning rather than to provide an archaic diction that can alienate the target reader. In addition, since the Quran is full of emotive expressions, the communicative strategy will try to transfer the same effect as these expressions to the target reader.

Once the translator has entirely understood the meaning of the Quran and adopted the appropriate strategy, he then starts the translation process. Muslims believe that the Quran is a divine message revealed from God to all peoples. Since messages are composed to convey a particular meaning, then meaning is the kernel element to be transferred. Nida and Taber (1969: 12) stress that "translating must aim primarily at reproducing the meaning; to do anything else is essentially false to one's task as a translator". Therefore, the translator has to free himself from the Quran's form and syntactic shackles and concentrate only on the content, nothing but content. This is because adherence to form usually results either in complete incomprehensibility, or in awkwardness. Nida (2003: 106) emphasizes that "an excessive effort to preserve the form inevitably results in a serious loss or distortion of the message". Benjamin (1992: 79) similarly avers that "a literal rendering of syntax completely demolishes the theory of reproduction of meaning and is a direct threat to comprehensibility". Hatim and Mason (1990: 8) assert that the ideal would be to translate both form and content, without one in any way affecting the other, but they say that this is not possible because the form of the source text may be characteristic of the ST conventions. So, rendering the form of the SL would inevitably obscure the message or sense of the text. Thus, adherence to the style of the Quran may in certain circumstances be unnecessary or even counterproductive in English. This is to confirm that it is "the content which must be preserved at any cost" (Nida 2003: 105).

The translator should start translating the Quranic text on the word level. He has, if possible, to find an exact meaning that corresponds to each word according to the context. To achieve an accurate translation of the verses as a whole, the exact meaning of the individual words should be considered first. This is because understanding the individual words is the basic element in achieving a successful and accurate translation on the verse level. As a matter of fact, the Quranic text is rich with very complex words whose meaning cannot be precisely expressed in any other language. Thus, translating on the word level will result in an absolute lack in the target language.

This is because the Quran includes words which are semantically complex. Akbar (1978: 3) claims that it is very difficult to transfer accurately into English every shade of meaning that is contained in the Arabic words of the Quran. Benjamin supports this general claim. He (1992: 79) believes that in translation, individual words can almost never fully produce the meaning they have in the original. Consequently, it must be known to the translator that achieving an accurate meaning at word level is very hard. Therefore, the translation of the meaning of the Quran often has to begin at verse level because translating at this level makes up any possible loss which can result from translating semantically complex words. The translator should make sure that the whole meaning of the verse is transferred accurately into English. All implicit elements of each verse such as simile, metaphor etc. must be explicit in the target language.

Through the translation, the translator might encounter words whose meaning he is not completely aware of. In this case, the translator should not use a dictionary at all. If he uses a dictionary, then he will fall into the trap of mistranslating the meaning. Baker (1992: 17) emphasizes that "it is impossible to just pick up words from the dictionary and replace them with the words of the SL". This is because, in many cases, the dictionary does not give the same sense as the original word, particularly in religious texts. The Quran has emotive, evocative and evoked vocabulary that the dictionary might not be able to express the meaning in one or two words. Therefore, the safest way to translate a problematic word and to avoid any possible mistake is for the translator to refer to the English native translator. They discuss the word together and then they decide what the equivalent and appropriate meaning is.

Once the stage of transferring the meaning is complete and results are revised by the transferring group, the draft should be consigned to the restructuring group. As mentioned earlier, the restructuring group should include an English native translator who heads a group which includes a stylist and an expert in religious terminology. The English native translator has a paramount role in improving the translation. His duty is to make the translation look like an original to the recipient. He needs to follow a number of procedures. First of all, the translator should make sure that the original meaning is transferred accurately. Then he works on having the translation free of any alien vocabulary or expressions peculiar to the English reader. Vocabulary must be up to date and its level of formality has to be comprehensible to readers of both an average and a high level of education. The translator must also work on correcting the grammatical mistakes. After

making sure that the language of the translation is free from any grammatical mistakes or alien expression, the translator is required to explain the cultural problematic faced by the English reader. Cultural voids might be proper names, geographical features, forms of behaviour, stories, historical elements, lexical items, etc. The restructuring translator can illustrate the cultural problems either in the text itself or in the margin on the same page as the text. This makes it easy for the reader to refer to the problem quickly and without any disturbance.

The Quran is full of emotive and religious expressions. These expressions have an extreme importance on the emotional response of the Arab reader or hearer. To achieve a similar response on the part of the English reader, it is important to involve a native English scholar of religions who is an expert in religious terminology and who has good experience of emotional behaviour and response. First, he should make sure that the religious terminology is reproduced accurately. If it is not accurate, he has to improve it. Second, he needs to work on generating emotive expressions that evoke a similar response on the part of the original reader. This improvement ensures that the translation will evoke the same, or a similar, response from the receptor.

When the English native translator has finished restructuring the translation, and the religious terminology expert has accomplished his work, the draft ought to be passed to the stylist. It must be noted that, to produce something of the charm and excellence of the Quranic style, requires real stylistic gifts. Therefore, the stylist who is involved must be a highly experienced writer. Moreover, he must be aware of the charm and excellence of the style of the Quran and its importance as an extraordinary text. This helps and guides the stylist to create a charming style that brings extraordinary beauty to the translation. The stylist might have the freedom to change words and expressions for the sake of an attractive style but any alteration must not affect the accuracy of the meaning.

The final work must achieve the following:

1) Content should have priority over style.
2) The level of style should be formal.
3) The translation has to be intelligible to Muslims as well as non-Muslims.
4) Long, involved structures should be broken up on the basis of receptor-language usage.

5) Idioms and fixed expressions should be changed or paraphrased when they make no sense or are likely to lead to incomprehensibility.

6) Third-person references to the first person should be changed to first person wherever ambiguity might result.

7) Proper names should in general be transcribed on the basis of the receptor language norms.

8) Wherever supplementary information is required, in order to explain historical details or cultural differences, this should be provided in notes in the margin, to be included on the page where the problem occurs.

9) All technical terms the translator cannot find equivalent to, e.g. zakat and tayammum, should be explained in a glossary.

10) The translation must be accompanied by the Arabic original version.

Once the process of restructuring has been completed, the next essential step is testing the translated version. This must cover accuracy of rendition, intelligibility, stylistic features, and ease. Dynamic equivalence must be checked in order to see how the potential receptor of the translation reacts to it. If people do not respond favourably, then it is not going to be accepted. In brief, there should not be anything in the translation which is stylistically awkward, structurally burdensome, linguistically unnatural, semantically misleading or incomprehensible.

8.7 Conclusion

We learned in this chapter that translation does not consist of a single subject, but involves three parties. They are: the original text, the translator and the target text. The translator is the most important party. This is because he assumes a double identity, receptor and sender. So, the translator plays an indispensable and irreplaceable role in any translation process, and is not a mere transmitter of words. The translator must be bilingual and bicultural; he must have a satisfactory knowledge of the source and target languages. He has to know the subtleties of meanings, the significant emotive values of words, and the stylistic features which determine the flavour and feel of the message. He must have a deep awareness of the cultures of the two languages in question. The translator must also have a thorough acquaintance with the subject matter concerned and should be faithful to both the original author and to the receptor. This chapter suggested that a translator of the meaning of the Quran must possess full mastery of other

fields. He must have a sound knowledge of the Prophetical sayings (hadith) in order to understand the Quran well. He must have a thorough knowledge of the exegesis of the consensus of the pioneering Muslim scholars of the Quran, he should know the Quran by heart and have a good knowledge of the history of the revelation of the Quran, and he must have a real spiritual feeling for the Quran.

This chapter argued that it is likely to be impossible to find someone who possesses all the aforementioned fields of knowledge. No individual is likely to possess all the necessary fields of knowledge to achieve a readable and comprehensible translation equivalent in ease to the Quran. Hence, this chapter proposed that this work must be performed by a team organized and supported by an independent world Muslim committee as the safest and most sensible way to produce an acceptable version of the meaning of the Quran in the target language. It also suggested a vital strategy as a guide for this proposed team and it proposed a task for each member of the team. This team, guided by the proposed strategy, will produce a translation that is stylistically normal, structurally easy, linguistically natural, accurate in meaning, and readily comprehensible.

Conclusion

Findings of the study

This study has shown in Chapter Six on the basis of the results of the questionnaire that the most readable translations of the meaning of the Quran into English being considered fail to render the original meaning explicitly in the target language. When reading the translations of the Quran, English readers struggle to grasp the meaning. This has been emphasized not only by the results of the questionnaire but also by a number of other groups. These groups are the interviewees, volunteers for the pilot study, my fellow students and others, and those who read the translations of the meaning of the Quran in English being considered for the purpose of helping me to choose the examples to include in my questionnaire. All these groups asserted that the reader struggles to comprehend the general meaning. They also stressed that the English version is tedious and does not stimulate the interest of the reader.

The extent to which the extracts included in the questionnaire were incomprehensible was extremely shocking. Despite the fact that the research targeted well-educated people who were mostly involved in academic work and who possessed good experience with difficult texts, the range of intelligibility was less than 5%. Not all the respondents who constitute this very low proportion understood the meaning of the problematic elements because the text was clear. Some of them understood it because they had previous knowledge of these elements while others guessed the meaning and were not sure about their responses.

The translations of the meaning of the Quran are unintelligible because they are rendered in poor quality English. These renditions involve a number of factors that hinder transferring the meaning clearly to the target reader. These obstruct the flow of the text, generate vagueness, and make the renditions very difficult and tedious. As shown in Chapter Seven, the questionnaire results brought to light at least seven reasons. These are: 1) Peculiar style; the original text is rendered in a style which is difficult to follow, foreign-sounding and unattractive. The target text suffers from alien word order, loss of coherence and cohesion, and long sentences with no proper punctuation or relative clauses. 2) Literal translation; some words, idioms, and fixed expressions are rendered

denotatively. They are transferred as they were found in the dictionary. Since the connotative meaning of a word in Arabic is often not the same as that of an English word having almost the same denotative sense, the literally rendered meaning neither transfers the genuine meaning nor does it match the general content of the text. The words are English but they do not relay a clear message. 3) Cultural differences; Quranic cultural expressions are rendered through either transliteration or literal rendering. The translators neither analyze the terms and aspects of the Quran nor do they find the closest or best equivalent in the target language to conjure up the same image. 4) Use of old-fashioned words; using obsolete words fails to transfer a clear meaning and generates tedium. 5) Transliteration; transliterated forms do not convey any meaning to target readers because they are merely a conjunction of English letters. These letters represent alien words which are neither lexicalized in the English language, nor are familiar in English-speaking culture. 6) Unusual orthography; the absence or misuse of punctuation marks confuses the English reader in that he cannot know where the sentence starts and where it ends. He cannot understand which clause follows which. It also means that ideas may be mixed up and the text difficult to follow. 7) Excessive use of explanations between brackets; the insertion of long phrases or clauses between brackets without conjunctions or other linkers breaks the flow of these phrases and clauses in the text, negatively influencing coherence and cohesion which are basic factors in readability. Chapter Seven recommended some techniques to tackle these problems.

This study has also illustrated in Chapter Seven that the inexplicitness and tedium of the text stem from poor translation and are not because the target language is incapable of expressing the original meaning clearly. The translator is the one to be blamed for the unsatisfactory work. Each translation was done by a single human being –or at most two- who did not have a complete knowledge of the source and receptor languages, full awareness of the two cultures, intimate acquaintance with the subject matter, mastery of style in the receptor language, and effective empathy with the Quran. Some translators were knowledgeable in Arabic, but they failed to render the intended meaning because they were neither familiar with the nuances of the target language nor aware of its culture. Others possessed a good knowledge of the target language but neither did they possess a good knowledge of Arabic nor did they enjoy sufficient knowledge of the Quran. This means that translators of the renditions of the meaning of the Quran in English being considered are not fully qualified to render the meaning of the Quran. Their lack of

experience in all fields of knowledge necessary to accomplish this mission has lead to unreliable translations.

Chapter Two pointed out that all Muslim and non-Muslim scholars and translation theorists stress that the Quran is in many respects untranslatable. The Quran contains some features which are impossible to reproduce in any language other than Arabic. They have agreed that only the meaning of the Quran can be translated into other languages. This chapter also showed that Muslim scholars have ascertained that there is a pressing need to translate the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic for three reasons; namely, to counteract the corrupt translations produced by both sectarian translators and non-Muslims, to make the meaning of the Quran clear for those Muslims who do not know Arabic, and to give the opportunity to non-Muslims who do not know Arabic to read and digest the precise meaning of the Quran so that the corrupt thoughts which negative and inaccurate accounts of Islam have introduced into the minds of westerners will be changed or removed. Giving that some Muslim scholars have stressed the pressing need to translate the meaning of the Quran into languages other than Arabic, there must be a clear version available to nearly every reader. The translation must be as accurate as possible, yet readable and fluent.

Producing a translation that is straightforward and as accurate as possible is not an impossible mission. It was claimed in this research that if the Quran had been revealed in English, the meaning would have certainly been as clear as in Arabic. Therefore, it might be possible to transfer the same meaning, or rather a very similar meaning in English if the linguistic shackles of the original are removed and cultural elements are tackled. The shortcomings that hinder the production of a readable text result from the incapability of the translators themselves and not from the inability of English to express the original. So, the competent translator is the main pillar for producing a reliable text. The translator who knows his job well and has mastery of the two languages as well as having a good knowledge of the two cultures along with a good knowledge of the subject, will definitely be able to produce a work which sounds like an original. Due to the importance of the translator in rendering the meaning clearly, this research dedicated a whole chapter to discussing this topic.

Chapter Eight suggested that in order to produce a reliable rendition, a translator of the meaning of the Quran must meet at least eight conditions. They are: 1) having a very good knowledge of Arabic, 2) having a solid knowledge of the Prophetic sayings, 3) having a thorough knowledge of the exegesis of the consensus of the pioneering Muslim scholars of the Quran, 4) knowing the Quran by heart and having a good knowledge of the history of the revelation of the Quran, 5) having a thorough knowledge of the target language and being aware of the culture of its native speakers, 6) having satisfactory experience in translation both theoretically and practically, 7) having a real spiritual feeling for the Quran, and 8) not reflecting non-orthodox sectarian views.

This research argued that it is likely to be impossible to find a single translator who meets the aforementioned conditions. Imperfection is the nature of a human being. No individual person can possess all fields of knowledge enabling him or her to produce a translation that transfers an accurate and natural-sounding meaning into the target language. Therefore, this research suggested, in Chapter Eight, that the safest and most sensible way to produce an acceptable version of the meaning of the Quran in the target language is for this work to be performed by a team of scholars. This team should include an Arab Muslim exegete, a translator who is a native speaker of Arabic and who is knowledgeable in English, and a translator who is a native speaker of English and who possesses a good knowledge of both Arabic and the Quran. Each member of the team will make up for the weakness of the other members. This chapter also suggested in detail a strategy for carrying out the translation. The translation should be performed in three stages; analysis, transfer, and restructuring. This will guarantee rendering the original meaning intact in a readable text.

In addition to the findings and issues mentioned above, this research has also looked at other areas. Chapter Three discussed literal translation. It argued that literal translation is unnatural and misleading and can never do justice to an excellent original; it distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and it fails to transfer a precise meaning in a comprehensible manner. This is why most translation theorists reject this type of translation. They argue that there is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words and elements of meaning within or across languages. They stress that the translator must strive for equivalence rather than identity, and that meaning must be given priority, for it is the content of the message which is of prime importance. This chapter showed that literal translation is most appropriate

only for ultra-detached kinds of texts such as those encountered in legal documents. It also showed that literal translation poses problems on different levels. These are; word, idiom, style and culture. Strategies for translation at the levels of word, idiom and style were considered. Finally, the chapter looked at the effect of literal translation on some translations of the meaning of the Quran into English. It showed how literal translation impedes the transfer of a precise meaning and how it affects comprehensibility.

Chapter Four considered the importance of culture in translation. It demonstrated that culture and language are interwoven. Translation cannot be achieved without taking culture into consideration. Neither can a culture be understood without its language, nor a language understood without knowing the culture. It also showed that a successful rendering of culture in translation relies, in the first instance, on the translator. The translator functions as a dictionary of culture since cultures themselves cannot be found in dictionaries. The real location of culture is in the head of the translator. This chapter classified situations where problems occur due to differences between the cultures of the ST and TT into three main types. The most prominent translation theorists who have suggested some specific procedures and strategies for tackling the cultural problems posed in translation in order to achieve communicative equivalence were considered in this chapter. Finally, the chapter showed that terms referring to the religious aspects of a culture are sometimes the most difficult to deal with, both in terms of analysis of the source vocabulary and in terms of finding the best receptor language equivalents. This is because the TL reader is not conscious of the various aspects of meaning involved. It then classified the situations where cultural problems are posed in translating the meaning of the Quran into English into six categories. These are: theological expressions, ritual expressions, abstract moral concepts, delexicalised expressions, material culture, and linguistic voids. Strategies for tackling these problems were discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Five discussed the methodology adopted in this research. This chapter considered the nature and aims of both research paradigms and research approaches. It also showed the weaknesses and strengths of each research approach. It then justified why this research has adopted a quantitative methodology. It talked about data collection, research population, research sample, pilot study, reliability and validity, the questionnaire, interviews, questionnaire design, questionnaire distribution and collection, and problems related to the questionnaire.

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Appendix 1 – Glossary

Albura̲q (البراق): A horse shaped beast with two wings which, according to Muslims, carried the Prophet Muhammad on the night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem then to heaven where he spoke to God from behind a veil and met other prophets. After Muhammad performed prayers in heaven, Albura̲q carried him back to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem then carried him back to Mecca.

'A̲d عاد: An ancient tribe that lived after Noah. It was prosperous, but disobedient to God, so God destroyed it with a violent westerly wind.

Al-Mash'ar Al-H̲ara̲m (المشعَر الحرام): A sacred mountain near the Muzdalifa area where Muslim pilgrims spend some time during the pilgrimage journey worshipping and supplicating God.

'Aqi̲qah (عقيقة): The sacrificing of one or two sheep on the occasion of the birth of a child, as a token of gratitude to Allah. This is optional.

'Arafa̲t (عرفات): A famous mountain located about twenty-five kilometers southeast of Mecca, where Muslim pilgrims spent the tenth day of pilgrimage. Staying on this mountain during this night is considered the most important practice on the pilgrimage.

'Awrah (عَورة): The parts of the human body which should be covered in Islam. A woman's 'Awrah is the whole of her body except the face and hands. A man's 'Awrah is from the navel down to the knees.

Bah̲i̲rah (بَحيرة) A she-camel who had given birth five times the last delivery being male. The pagan Arabs used to slit its ears and let it loose for free pasture.

Diyyah (دِيَة): Blood money (wound, killing, etc.), as compensation paid by the killer's relatives to the victim's family in the case of manslaughter.

Fidyah (فدية): A compensation for a missed or wrongly practiced religious obligation paid to poor and needy people, usually in the form of money or foodstuffs.

H̲ajj (الحج): Pilgrimage to Mecca. A Muslim has to do this once in their lives if they are able financially and physically. The period of the Hajj is ten days.

H̲amin (حام) A stallion camel freed from work for the sake of the idols. If a camel had impregnated ten she-camels, the pagan Arabs used to call it a stallion camel and used to let it loose.

H̲ija̲b (حجاب): A long dress prescribed to Muslim women to cover their whole body from head to feet except their face and hands.

'Iddah (العدة): God's prescribed waiting period for a woman after the divorce or death of her husband, following which she can remarry.

Ih̲ra̲m (إحرام): 1) A white cotton robe worn by male pilgrims to Mecca, formed from pieces of cloth wound around the waist and over the shoulder; 2) The state of holiness conferred or symbolized by the wearing of the Ih̲ram.

Ima̲m (إمام): Any Muslim person who leads Muslims in congregational prayers. It also describes the head of a Muslim state.

I'tika̲f (إعتكاف): Seclusion in a mosque for a specific period of time for the purpose of worshipping God only. One in such a state should not have sexual intercourse with his wife

Ja̲hiliyyah (الجاهلية): "Ignorance" belonging to the period before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ka'bah (الكعبة): A square stone building in Mecca covered with black cloths which Muslims believe was built by Adam then rebuilt by the prophet Abraham for worshipping God. Muslims direct themselves towards this House in their prayers and they perform pilgrimage to it every year

when they walk around it. It represents the House of God and it is the most holy place for them.

Kaffarah (كفارة): Making atonement for uttering or committing an unlawful thing in Islam, usually in the form of money paid to poor and needy people.

Khimar (الخِمار): A piece of cloth with which a woman covers her head and neck area.

Maqam Ibrahim (مقام إبراهيم): A raised area attached to the Ka'bah on which Muslims believe Abraham stood while he was building the Ka'bah in Mecca.

Qiblah (القِبلة): The direction towards which all Muslims face in their prayers that direction being the Ka'bah in Mecca.

Rak'ah (رَكعة): A unit of Muslim prayer which consists of standing, bowing and two prostrations.

Sa'ibah (سائبة) A she-camel let loose for free pasture and water. Before starting a long journey, or if someone was ill, the pagan Arabs used to vow to consecrate a she-camel to their idols if they returned from the journey safely, or if the sick person recovered.

Tawaf (طواف): Walking around the Ka'bah in Mecca seven times.

Tayammum (تَيَمُّم): Striking the hands slightly against clean earth and then passing the palm of each hand over the back of the other, blowing off the dust and then passing the two hands over the face. This is performed in Islam instead of ablution when a Muslim has no access to water.

'Umrah (عُمرة): A visit to Mecca during which a Muslim walks around the Ka'ba and jogs between two mountains called As-Safa and Al-Marwah. The Muslim performs these and other rituals while he is in *Ihram*. 'Umrah is performed at any time of the year except at pilgrimage (Hajj) time. 'Umrah is not obligatory in Islam.

Waliy (وَلِي): Protector, guardian or custodian.

Wasila (وَصِيلة) A she-camel who has given birth to male and female twins. If a she-camel had given birth to a male, the pagan Arabs used to dedicate it to their idols, while if it delivered a female, the new born female was kept for them. If the she-camel had delivered male and female twins then they used to let it loose for the sake of their idols.

Wudu' (وُضوء): Ablution, the washing of the face and the hands up to the elbows, wiping the head and ears with wet hands, and washing the feet up to the ankles for the purpose of performing prayers or walking around the Ka'bah.

Zakat (زَكاة): A fixed proportion (2.5%) of the wealth saved over a year paid annually for the benefit of the poor in the Muslim community. Zakat is obligatory being one of the five pillars of Islam. Zakat is the major economic means for establishing social justice and leading Muslim society to prosperity and social security.

Appendix 2 - Questionnaire Format

Dear sir/madam

This questionnaire forms the main part of my PhD thesis on possible reasons for the incomprehensibility of the translations of the meaning of some verses of the Quran into English. This questionnaire tests the comprehension of native speakers of English. It also tries to find out the reasons for the incomprehensibility of the meaning of the verses where appropriate. Your help in this respect is highly important and appreciated because the results will be vital for the completion of my PhD thesis. I can guarantee that any personal information will be kept confidential and that no direct reference to any person will be made in the discussion of the survey.

I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire and return it within a month. After you have completed the questionnaire, please put it in the stamped addressed envelope supplied and drop it in the nearest post box.

Should you have any query or comment, please do not hesitate to contact me by one of the following means.
E-mail - Raed.aljabari@gmail.com
Mobile - 07708762193

Thank you in advance for your cooperation
Raed Al-Jabari
....

Please answer the following questions.

A) Are you An Academic? { } A Post-graduate student { } Other { }

A-1) If you are an academic, please tick your highest qualification achieved
1- BA { } 2- MA { } 3- PhD { }

A-2) If you chose other, please tick the highest degree you have been awarded
1- BA { } 2- MA { } 3- PhD { }

B) Are you Muslim? { } Non-Muslim? { }

B-1) If you are non-Muslim, do you have previous knowledge of the Quran?
1) Yes { } 2) No { }

B-2) If you answered "yes" for question B-1, what degree of knowledge of the Quran would you say you have?
1) very poor { } 2) poor { } 3) moderate { } 4) good { } 5) very good { }
....

The questionnaire

Please read the following verses of the Quran carefully then answer the questions about each verse. This questionnaire should be completed without referring to a dictionary. Please print your answers clearly.

Verse 1)

*"**And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term**; and know that God knows what is in your hearts, so be fearful of Him."*

Arberry (2:235)

1.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

1.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 1.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the words in bold.

....

....

1.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 1.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

1.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

....

Verse 2)

*"Glory be to Him, who **carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque** the precincts of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing."*

Arberry (17:1)

2.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

2.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 2.1, please explain what you understand by *the Holy Mosque and the Further Mosques.*

....

....

2.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 2.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given.
(You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

2.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

Verse 3)

*"**Your women are a tillage for you, so come unto your tillage as you wish**, and forward for your souls; and fear God, and know that you shall meet Him."*

Arberry (2:224)

3.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

3.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 3.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the words in bold.

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....

3.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 3.1, which one of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

3.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
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....

Verse 4)

"Verily those who plight their fealty to thee plight their fealty in truth to Allah."

Ali (48:10)

4.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible   B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible   D) Totally incomprehensible

4.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 4.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the verse.
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4.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 4.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

4.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
....
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6.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 6.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style

F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

6.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
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Verse *7)* "

Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit, 'worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord': and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when Thou didst take me up Thou wast the Watcher over them, and Thou art a witness to all things.

Ali (5:117)

7.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

7.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 7.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the verse.
....
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7.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 7.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

7.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

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Verse 8)

*"Hast thou not seen how thy Lord did with **Ad, Iram of the pillars**, the like of which was never created in the land, and **Thamood**, who hollowed the rocks in the valley, and Pharaoh, he of the tent-pegs, who all were insolent in the land and worked much corruption therein?"*

Arberry (89:5-10)

8.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

8.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 8.1, please explain what the following are:
A) *"Ad, Iram of the pillars"*

....

B) "Thamood"

....

8.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 8.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

8.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

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Verse 9)

*"**God has not appointed cattle dedicated to idols, such as Bahira, Sa'iba, Wasila, Hami** ; but the unbelievers forge against God falsehood, and most of them have no understanding."*

Arberry (5:102)

9.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

9.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 9.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the words in bold.

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....

9.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 9.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

9.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

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Verse 10)

*"**Any one of you who has not the affluence to be able to marry believing freewomen in wedlock, let him take believing handmaids that your right hand own;** God knows very well your faith; the one of you is as the other".*

Arberry (4:29)

10.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

10.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 10.1, please paraphrase your understanding of the words in bold.

....

....

10.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 10.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

10.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
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Verse 11)

"*This is a book We have sent down, blessed and confirming that which was before it, and for thee to warn the* ***Mother of Cities*** *and those about her; and those who believe in the world to come believe in it, and watch over their prayers.*

Arberry (6:92)

11.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible | *B) Fairly comprehensible*
C) Fairly incomprehensible | D) Totally incomprehensible

11.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 11.1, what do you understand by "Mother of Cities"?
....
....

11.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 11.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

11.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
....

....

Verse 12)

"O Messenger. Let not those grieve thee, who race each other into unbelief: (whether it be) among those who say "We believe" with their lips but whose hearts have no faith; or it be among Jews,-men who will listen to any lie,- will listen even to others who have never so much as come to thee. They change the words from their (right) times and places: they say, "If ye are given this, take it, but if not, beware!" If any one's trial is intended by Allah, thou hast no authority in the least for him against Allah. For such - it is not Allah.s will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a heavy punishment."

Ali (5:41)

12.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

12.2) If you chose one of the last two options in 12.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

12.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

Verse 13)

"Verily, Allah is not ashamed to set forth a parable even of a mosquito or so much more when it is bigger (or less when it is smaller) than it. And as for those who believe, they know that it is the Truth from their Lord, but as for those who disbelieve, they say: "What did Allah intend by this parable?" By it He misleads many, and many He guides thereby. And He misleads thereby only those who are Al-Fasiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah).

H&KH (2:26)

13.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

13.2) If you chose one of the last two options in 13.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it

in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

13.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
....
....

Verse 14)

"Verily, your wali (Protector or Helper) is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, - those who ***perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat****, and they are Raki'un (those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer).*

H&KH (5:55)

14.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

14.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 14.1, what do you understand by "*perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat*"
....
....
....

14.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 14.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

14.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
....

....

Verse 15)

"and (remember) when We made the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety. And take you (people) the Maqam (place) of Ibrahim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrahim (Abraham)? (alayhi assalam)? stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two Rak'at after the Tawaf of the Ka'bah at Makkah), and We commanded Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isma'il (Ishmael) that they should purify My House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) for those who are circumambulating it, or stay (I'tikaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer).

H&KH (2:125)

15.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

15.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 15.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

15.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
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....

Verse 16)

*"And on the Day when He will gather them (all) together (and say): "**O you assembly of jinn!** Many did you mislead of men," and their Auliya` (friends and helpers) amongst men will say: "Our Lord! We benefited one from the other, but now we have reached our appointed term which You did appoint for us." He will say: "The Fire be your dwelling-place, you will dwell therein forever, except as Allah may will. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing."*

H&KH (6:129)

16.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

16.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 16.1, what do you understand by "assembly of jinn".
....

16.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 16.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

16.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.
....
....

Verse 17)

*"Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what Allah hath provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan: for he is to you and avowed enemy. **(Take) eight (head of cattle) in (four) pairs: of sheep a pair, and of goats a pair; say, hath He forbidden the two males, or the two females, or (the young) which the wombs of the two females enclose? Tell me with knowledge if you are truthful:***

Ali (6:142-3)

17.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

17.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 17.1, please paraphrase the meaning of the words in bold.

....

....

....

17.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 17.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (Using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

17.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

....

Verse 18)

*"O you who believe! Fulfil (your) obligations. Lawful to you (for food) are all the beasts of cattle except that which will be announced to you (herein), game (also) being unlawful when you assume **Ihram** for Hajj or Umrah (pilgrimage). Verily, Allah commands that which He wills".*

H&KH (5:1)

18.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible D) Totally incomprehensible

18.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 18.1, please explain what "*Ihram*" is.

....

18.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 18.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

18.4) If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

....

Verse 19)

*"O ye **People of the Book**! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and **turn them hindwards**, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out".*

Ali (4:47)

19.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

19.2) If you chose one of the first two options in 19.1, please state:
A) Who "*People of the Book*"
are...
B) What "*turn them hindwards*"
means...

19.3) If you chose one of the last two options in 19.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation

....

19.4)If you have any further comments on this verse please state them below.

....

....

Verse 20)

"And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), when she said : "My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his work, and save me from the people who are Zalimun (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allah). And Maryam (Mary), the daughter of 'Imran who guarded her chastity. And We breathed into (the sleeve of her shirt or her garment) through Our Ruh [I.e. Jibril (Gabriel)], and she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord [I.e. believed in the Words of Allah: "Be!" - and he was; that is 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) as a Messenger of Allah], and (also believed in) His Scriptures, and she was of the Qanitun (i.e. obedient to Allah).

H&K(66:11-12)

20.1) Having read the verse, how would you rate it in terms of comprehensibility?

A) Completely comprehensible
B) Fairly comprehensible
C) Fairly incomprehensible
D) Totally incomprehensible

20.2) If you chose one of the last two options in 19.1, which of the following do you think is/are the cause of incomprehensibility? If you do not think the cause is indicated here, please indicate it in the space given. (You can choose more than one reason.)

A) Literal Translation (using normal words but with unclear meaning)
B) Cultural difference/incompatibilities
C) Transliteration (use of Arabic words in Latin script)
D) Use of old-fashioned words
E) Peculiar style
F) Excessive use of explanations in brackets
G) Unusual orthography and punctuation
....

20.3)If you have any further comment on this verse please state it below.
....
....
....

Once again, thank you very much indeed for your time.

If you have any further comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by either email address or mobile number provided above.